

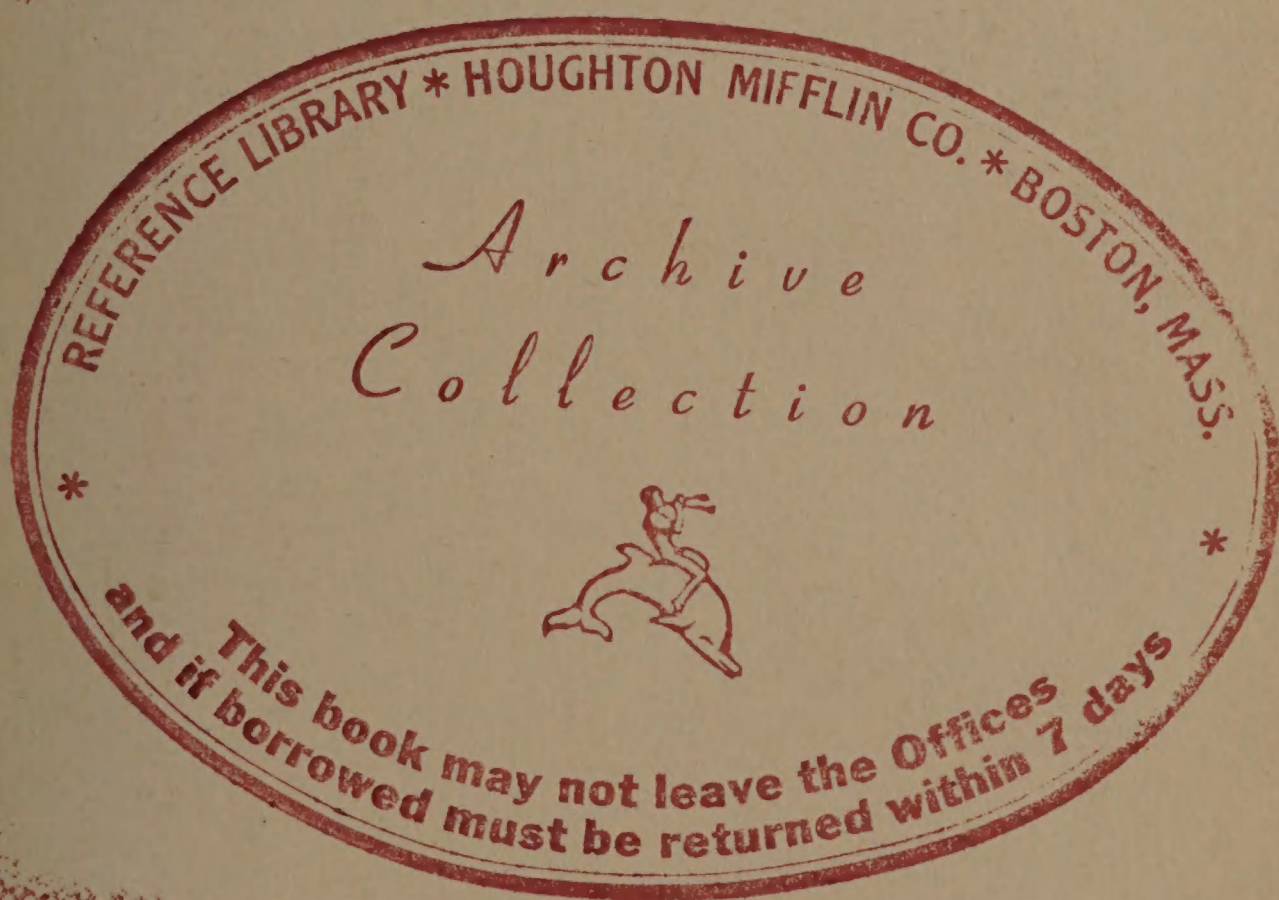
THE  
RUSSIAN ROAD  
TO CHINA

BY  
LINDON BATES, JR.













THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA









A MAID OF OLD MUSCOVY

(From a painting by Venuga)



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BY

LINDON BATES, JR.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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## CONTENTS

I. THE PATH OF THE COSSACK . . . . .	I
II. THE GREAT SIBERIAN RAILWAY . . . . .	25
III. IN IRKUTSK . . . . .	71
IV. SLEDGING THROUGH TRANSBAIKALIA . . . . .	114
V. IN TATAR TENTS . . . . .	173
VI. THE CITY OF THE REBORN GOD . . . . .	220
VII. RUSSIA IN EVOLUTION . . . . .	273
VIII. THE STORY OF THE HORDES . . . . .	322
IX. CHINA . . . . .	364





## ILLUSTRATIONS

A MAID OF OLD MUSCOVY . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a painting by Venuga	
YERMAK'S EXPEDITION TO SIBIR, ATTACKED BY THE TATARS . . . . .	8
From a painting by Surikova	
CHURCH OF ST. BASIL, MOSCOW . . . . .	20
Ivan the Terrible blinded its architect that he might never duplicate the masterpiece	
BRIDGE OVER THE IRTISH . . . . .	38
ALONG THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY . . . . .	38
DINING-CAR SALOON — VIEW OF THE LIBRARY . . . . .	46
CITIES OF NEW RUSSIA — TIUMEN, TOMSK, PERM . . . . .	50
ISLAND OF KALTIGEI, LAKE BAIKAL . . . . .	68
VILLAGE OF LISTVIANITCHNOE, LAKE BAIKAL . . . . .	68
THE ANGARA RIVER, IRKUTSK . . . . .	76
THE CATHEDRAL, IRKUTSK . . . . .	76
A CHAPEL IN IRKUTSK . . . . .	86
BOLSHOISKAIA, IRKUTSK . . . . .	86
THE BAZAAR, IRKUTSK . . . . .	90

THE ICE-BREAKER, YERMAK — LAKE BAIKAL . . . .	98
THE ORGANIZERS OF THE CHITA REPUBLIC . . . .	108
BAIKAL STATION . . . . .	116
THE HIGHLANDS OF TRANSBAIKALIA . . . . .	116
SLEDGING SOUTHWARDS . . . . .	126
SIBERIAN TYPES — PEASANT, VILLAGE STOREKEEPER . .	136
PEASANT TYPES . . . . .	150
A CHICKOYA GIRL . . . . .	164
A TROITZKOSAVSK STUDENT . . . . .	164
A WAYSIDE TEMPLE . . . . .	178
A MONGOL BELLE AND HER YURTA . . . . .	186
A ZABAİKALSKAIA BURIAT . . . . .	186
A MONGOL "BLACK MAN" . . . . .	206
TEMPLE OF GIGIN, URGА . . . . .	222
TEMPLE IN THE URGА LAMASERY . . . . .	228
A PROSTRATING PILGRIMAGE . . . . .	234
A GRAND LAMA . . . . .	244
CHINESE MANDARIN . . . . .	256
GIGIN, THE LIVING BUDDHA . . . . .	256
CHINESE ARCHWAY, URGА MAIMACHEN . . . . .	262

# ILLUSTRATIONS

ix

THE GREAT WALL . . . . .	270
THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW . . . . .	282
RUSSIAN TYPES — DRAGOON, CONSTABLE . . . . .	292
STREET SCENES IN MOSCOW . . . . .	302
(The Tverskaia Gate, Loubianskaia Place)	
RUSSIAN TYPES — PEDDLER, POLICEMAN . . . . .	316
THE MIRACLE OF ATILA'S REPULSE . . . . .	332
(From the painting by Raphael in the Vatican)	
ON THE ROAD TO THE MING TOMBS . . . . .	342
THE GLORY IS DEPARTED . . . . .	360
THE BRIDGE AND TABLETS IN PEI-HAI . . . . .	368
HSUEN-WU GATE, PEKING . . . . .	374
PEKING, WHERE THE ALLIES' MAIN ASSAULT WAS MADE . . . . .	380
SUMMER PALACE OF THE EMPEROR . . . . .	388
MAP OF ASIA, SHOWING ROUTE FROM MOSCOW TO PEKING . . . . .	392





# THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

## I

### THE PATH OF THE COSSACK

**A**N ancient way leads across northern Asia to the Chinese borderland. The steel of the great Siberian Railroad harnesses now the stretch which mounts the Urals, pierces the steppes, winds through the Altai foothills, and by cyclopean cuts and tunnels girdles Lake Baikal. From Verhneudinsk southward, it has remained as an ancient post-road leading through the Trans-Baikal highlands to the frontier garrison town of Kiahta. Over the Mongolian border at Maimachen, it has narrowed into a camel-trail threading the barren hills to the encampment of the Tatar hordes at holy Urga. Thence it strikes across the sandy wastes of Gobi, and passes the ramparts of the Great Wall of China, on its way toward Peking and the Pacific.

Through five centuries this road has been building. Cossacks blazed its way; musketoon-armed Strelitz, adventuring traders, convicts condemned for sins or sincerity, land-seeking peasants, exiled dissenters, voyaging officials — all have trampled it.

## 2 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

Hiving workmen under far-brought engineers have pushed the rails onward, bridging the chasms and heaping the defiles. Following it eastward, unpeopled wastes have been sown to homesteads, hamlets have grown into cities. To the very gateway of China it has led the Muscovite. It is the path of Slavic advance.

The way scarcely passed Novgorod in the early sixteenth century when the great family of the Stroganovs, a "kindred in Moscovie called the sonnes of Anika living neare the Castle of Saint Michael the Archangel," began the fur-trade with the Samoiéd tribesmen from Siberia, who paddled down the Wichida River to barter peltries with the Russians. The prudent merchant Anika, looking to a more permanent source for those valued furs than the irregular visits of the aborigines, planned to anticipate his brother traders in their purchases. He sent east with a band of returning Samoiéds some of his own henchmen carrying, for traffic with the inhabitants, "divers base merchandise, as small bels, and other like Dutch small wares." The agents returned to report what impressed them most. There were no cities. The Samoiéds were "lothsome in feeding," — even a Russian frontiersman might shrink from the cud of a reindeer's stomach as food, — and knew neither corn nor bread. They were cunning archers, whose arrows were headed with sharpened stones and fishbones. They were clad in skins, wearing in summer the



furry side outward and in winter inward. They willingly gave sable-skins for Dutch bells.

A series of trading expeditions began, which made the Stroganovs so enormously wealthy that "the kindred of Anika knew no ends of their goods." Indeed, they gained so much by this exploitation that they began to fear the application by the Czar's agent of a monetary test of patriotism. So, by a stroke of finance not unknown in modern days, there was arranged the Russian equivalent for carrying five thousand shares of Metropolitan. A block of small wares for the account of the Czar's brother-in-law, Boris, was added to the stock in an especially important expedition among the Samoieds and Ostiaks. The adventurers got far inland. They saw men riding on elks, and sledges drawn by dogs. They returned with wonderful tales of marksmanship, and, more important, brought back enough furs to give Boris a dividend, in gratitude for which he secured to the Stroganovs the grant of an enormous tract of land along the Kama River and a monopoly of the trade with the aborigines.

The Stroganovs grew and thrived. They scattered trading-posts and factories along the river-highways and sent many parties into the interior to barter. In the half-century following old Anika's expedition, they had carried the Slavic way to the Urals.

In the summer of 1578, when Maxim Stroganov was ruling over the family estates along the Kama,

## 4 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

one Yermak, heading a fugitive band of Cossacks, tattered and spent, with dented armor and drooping ponies, straggled into camp and offered service. With great delicacy Maxim forbore pressing too closely his inquiry into their antecedents. It might have wounded Yermak's susceptibilities to avow that his chief lieutenant, Ivan Koltso, was under sentence of death for capturing and sacking a town of the Nogoy, and that the immediate cause of his advent was an army of Imperial Strelitz, which had driven his band from the Volga District for piracy and highway robbery.

The situation on the far side of the Urals, where the skin-hunting tribes had been conquered by a roving horde of Tatars under Kutchum Khan, was at this time interfering sadly with the Stroganovs' fur business. Eight hundred Cossacks, furthermore, of shady character and urgent needs were undesirable neighbors. So the prudent Maxim, not particularly solicitous as to which of the two might be eliminated, offered Yermak a supply of new muskets if he would go away and fight the Tatars. They were not pleasant people for the Cossacks to meet, these former masters of Moscow. But behind were the soldiers of Ivan the Terrible. With a possible conquest before, and the Strelitz behind, Yermak gladly chose to invade the Tatar territory, which is now western Siberia.

Up the Chusovaya River the little expedition started in 1579, damming the stream with sails to

get the boats across its shallows. Penetrating far into the mountains, the band reached a point where a portage could be made across the Ural water-shed. Then they headed down the Tura River into Siberia. Here the invaders met the first army of the Tatars under Prince Yepancha, and with small loss drove them back. Yermak made his winter camp on the site of the present city of Tiumen.

Next year the advance began once more. The Khan of the Tatars, Kutchum, was alive to the seriousness of the incursion, and prepared to ambush the Cossack flotilla as it descended the Tura. At a chosen spot chains were stretched across the stream, and bowmen were stationed on the banks to await the coming of Yermak and overwhelm with arrows his impeded forces. The Tatar sentries above the ambuscade signaled the coming of the boats; all eyes were turned intently upstream. Then Yermak's soldiers fell upon them from the rear, to their total surprise and his complete victory. Straw-stuffed figures in Cossack garments had come down in the boats; the men themselves had made a land-circuit and had struck the enemy unprepared.

In defense of his threatened capital, Sibir, the old Khan rallied once more. He assembled a great army, thirty times that of the Cossacks. For the invaders, however, retreat was more perilous than advance. Yermak went on, and in a great fight on the banks of the Irtish, again prevailed. With his forces reduced by battle and disease to some three



## 6 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

hundred effectives, he entered Sibir on October 25, 1581. A few days later the Ostiak tribes, glad to escape their Koran-coercing masters, proffered their allegiance, and the Cossack saddle was on Siberia.

But how precarious was their seat! Southward were the myriads of the unconquered hordes of Tatar; only one of the score of their khans had been vanquished. As thistledown is blown before the wind, so could Yermak's oft-decimated band have been swept away had once the march of the Mongols' main division turned northward. Girding him round were the self-submitting Ostiaks, loyal for the moment to those who had won them freedom from the old proselyting overlord, but not long to be relied upon once the weight of Cossack tribute — the fur-yassak — began to be felt.

But what the Tatar hordes had not, what the Ostiak hunters had not, the three hundred Cossacks had — a man. This man, starting his march as the hunted captain of a band of outlaws, could conquer half a continent. Then over the heads of his employers, the mighty family of Stroganov, over the heads of governors of provinces, of boyars, of ministers to the throne, he could send by his outlaw lieutenant, Ivan Koltso, loftily, imperially, as a prince to a king, his offer of the realm of Siberia to Ivan Vasilevich.

Ivan the Terrible, Czar of all the Russias, he who had blinded the architect of St. Basil, lest he plan a second masterpiece; he who had tortured and slain

a son, hated less for his intrigues than for his unroyal weakness, responded imperially. Over the long versts Ivan's courier carried to Yermak a pardon, confirmation as ruler of the newly-won realm and the Czar's own mantle, an honor accorded only to the greatest, the boyars of Muscovy. Following the messenger eastward there plodded three hundred musket-armed Strelitz to bear aid to the Cossack garrison. Sorely now were these reinforcements needed, for the Ostiak tribes flamed into rebellion against King Stork. With Kutchum's Tatars, they returned to the attack and besieged Sibir. Once again, though hemmed about by the multitude of his enemies, the valor of Yermak saved his cause. In a totally unexpected sally, in June, 1584, the Tatar camp was surprised, a great number massacred, and the besiegers scattered.

The whole country, however, save only the city of Sibir, was still in arms. Engagements between small parties were constant. Ivan Koltso, striving to open a way for a trader's caravan, fell with his fifty, cut down to the last man. Yermak, marching out to avenge him, was himself surprised near the Irtish. With Ulysses-like adroitness, he and two followers escaped the massacre and reached the river-bank, where a small skiff promised safety. Leaping last for the boat, Yermak fell short, and, weighted with his armor, sank in the river that he had given to Russia. The two Cossack soldiers alone floated down to their comrades.

## 8 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

One hundred and fifty, all that were left of them, started their long homeward retreat. Far from Sibir, they met a hundred armed men sent by the Czar. Great was the spirit, not unworthy of the dead leader, that turned them back, to march to a site twelve miles from Sibir, where they built their own town, now the city of Tobolsk.

In the years that followed, their nomad enemies drifted south, leaving those behind who cared not for their old khan's quarrels. The phlegmatic Ostiaks returned to their hunting and to their feasts of uncooked fox-entrails. The long fight had rolled past, leaving the Slavic way undisputed to the Irtish.

Well it was, for no more of the Strelitz marched to the aid of the garrisons. Russia was in the throes of civil war and invasion, — the long-remembered "Smutnoe Vremya," time of troubles. Boris Godunov, once favorite of Ivan the Terrible, became the real ruler in the reign of the weak Feodor. On the death of this prince, with the heir-apparent Dimitri suspiciously slain, he had mounted the empty throne, and a pretender, claiming to be Dimitri miraculously escaped, had risen up in Poland, gained the support of the king, and marched against Boris. Though the Polish army was routed, Boris succumbed shortly after to a poison-hastened demise.

Dimitri attacked the new czar, captured Moscow, and was crowned in the Kremlin by the Poles.







YERMAK'S EXPEDITION TO SIBERIA

(From a painting)



R ATTACKED BY THE TATARS

by Surikova)





A revolution followed within a year, in which the pseudo-Dimitri was slain. Meanwhile the Poles were devastating Russia more cruelly than had the old Tatar conquerors. At length Minim the butcher of Novgorod led a popular revolt, which in 1613 carried to the throne Michael, the first of the Romanovs.

Through all these years, despite the fact that anarchy and chaos rioted over Muscovy, despite the fact that no troops came to aid in the advance, the Cossacks still pressed their way, contested by the scattered bands of Tatars, and farther on by the Buriats, the Yakuts, the Koriats. After these fighters and conquerors came the traders and colonists, with their families, following along the road that had been won. The valleys of the great Siberian rivers, which so short a time before had been the grazing-grounds of the Tatars, became dotted now with the farms of the new-come settlers. The advance guards of the fur-traders, with block-houses guarding the portages, and clustering wooden huts and churches, pushed south and east as far as Kuznetz, at the head of navigation on the River Tom, and to the foot of the Altai Mountains. North and east the trade-route was advanced to the Yenesei, twenty-two hundred miles inland. As many as sixty-eight hundred sables went back to Russia in 1640, together with great quantities of fox, ermine, and squirrel-skins.

The quaint volumes of "Purchas his Pilgrimes,"

published in 1625, tell of some of the early explorations. A band of Cossacks dared the upper Yenesei, which "hath high mountains to the east, among which are some that cast out fire and brimstone." They made friends of the cave-dwelling Tunguses in this region, who were themselves stirred to explore, and went on far eastward to another river, less than the Yenesei but as rapid. By faster running the Tunguses caught some of the inhabitants, who pointed across the river and said "Om! Om!" The old chronicler diligently records the speculation as to what "Om! Om!" could mean. Some thought that it signified thunder, others held it a warning that the great beyond teemed with devils. These unfortunates slow-running natives died, "probably of fright," when the Tunguses, in a spirit as naïvely unfeeling as if they were collecting curios, were taking them back to be exhibited to their friends the Cossacks. How far these Tunguses had pierced cannot be told. In one of the dialects of the Yakuts who live beyond Baikal, "ta-oom" or "tanakhoom" means "greetings." Had the Tunguses and the Cossacks who followed them arrived at the Yakuts' country? Or was the river on which passed "ships with sails" and beyond which was heard the booming of brazen bells the Amur? Were those the junks and temple-gongs of the Manchus? *Ni snaia*, — who knows?

In 1637 the Cossacks reached and established themselves in Yakutsk. In 1639 by the far northern



route they pierced to the Sea of Okhotsk. In 1644 a party reached the delta of the Kalyma, and curiously speculated upon the mammoth tusks which they found. In 1648, on the Cellinga River beyond Lake Baikal they built Fort Verhneudinsk. Had their tide of conquest now rolled southward, up the Cellinga Valley, the Russian Eagles might to-day be flying over Peking. Only the Kentai Mountains were between them and prostrate Mongolia, enfeebled by the internecine warfare of her rival khans. From Mongolia, the road, worn by so many conquerors of old, leads fair and clear to the Chi-li Province and the heart of China.

But they passed this gateway by, those old Cossack heroes, as the railway builders have passed it by, to press with Poyarkov to the Pacific; to conquer, with Khabarov, the Amur; to meet in desperate conflict the whale-skin cuirassed Koriats of the coast; to battle with the Manchu in conflicts where "by the Grace of God and the Imperial good fortune, and our efforts, many of those dogs were slain"; to fight until but an unvanquished sixty-eight were left of the garrison of eight hundred in beleaguered Albazin.

The current of conquest passed by this door to China, but the swelling stream of commerce searched it out. In 1638, the Boyar Pochabov, crossing Baikal on the ice, broke the first way to Urga, the capital of the Mongolian Great Khan, and gained the friendship of the monarch. In the

interests of trade, the deputies of the Czar Alexei Michailovitch followed up the opening with an embassy in 1654 to the Chinese Emperor himself. Over steppe and mountain and desert the mission wound its weary way to Kalgan, the outpost city beside the Chinese Wall, and then on to Peking, bearing to the Bogdo Khan, the Yellow Czar, the presents of Chagan Khan, the White Czar.

From the Forbidden Palace at Peking were started back, four years later, return presents, including ten *puds* of the first tea that reached Russia. With the presents came a message that drove flame into the bearded cheeks of the Czar and set his Muscovite boyars to grasping their sword-hilts. "In token of our especial good-will we send gifts in return for your tribute." Thus, the Chinese Emperor.

The answer of the Czar started another legation plodding across a continent, and the retort was thrown at the feet of his Yellow Majesty. It was a summons forthwith to tender his vassalage to Russia. The Czar's gauntlet had been hurled across Asia. But all it brought was beggary to the traders who had begun to press along the newly-opened route to a commercial conquest of the East.

Soon Russia regretted the fruitage of her challenge. In 1685 Golovin's embassy left Moscow, and, arriving two years later at Verhneudinsk, opened negotiations with Peking. A Chinese commission then made its way north, and at Nerchinsk, August 27, 1689, was signed the famous treaty

closing to Russia her Amur outlet to the Pacific, purchased with such desperate valor at Albazin, but granting to a limited number of Russian merchants trading privileges into China.

A lively traffic at once sprang up. Long caravans, silk- and tea-laden, crossed the Mongolian deserts, the Siberian steppes and hills, and the forested Urals, taking the road to Europe. A little Russian settlement was founded at Peking, and a traders' caravansary was built. The church constructed by the prisoners of Albazin, who had been so kindly treated by the Manchus that they at first refused the release which the treaty brought, gave place to a larger edifice erected by popes from Russia.

Soon, however, the Russians again offended the Celestial Emperor. In their riotous living, the quickly enriched merchants disquieted the sober Chinese. The Siberians over the frontier gave asylum to a band of seven hundred Mongol freebooters, whom it was urgently desired to present to a Chinese headsman. So commerce was forbidden anew, and most of the reluctant merchants left their compound. Some stayed and assimilated with the Chinese, retaining, however, their religion; and for years a mixed race observed in Peking the rites of Greek Orthodox Christianity.

It may seem strange that rulers so energetic as Peter the Great and some of his successors took no steps to resent by force of arms the arbitrary acts of the Chinese Emperor. But much was going on in



Russia; Peter was occupied with his invasion of Persia, and Catherine was without taste for a distant and doubtful campaign. The garrisons scattered over the enormous area of Siberia were numerically too weak and too poorly equipped to do more than hold their own. So, when commerce was once more interdicted and the merchants banished, recourse was had to diplomacy. In 1725 the Bogdo Khan relented enough to receive Count Ragusinsky with a special embassy from Catherine the First, which arranged the second great agreement with China, called the Treaty of Kiahta.

By it the frontier cities of Kiahta in Siberia, and Maimachen, facing it just across the line in Mongolia, were established as the gateway to Chinese trade. The treaty provided for the extradition of bandits and for a perpetual peace and friendship between the high contracting parties. Ever since, the citizens of Kiahta have alternately blessed and blamed Ragusinsky, — blamed him because, in the fear lest any stream flowing out of Chinese into Russian territory should be poisoned, he settled the boundary city beside a Siberian brook so inadequate that Kiahtans have suffered ever since for lack of water, with the river Bura only nine versts away in China; blessed him because of the great prosperity the treaty brought to their doors.

The tea carried by this highway became Russia's national drink. Great warehouses arose, built caravansary-wise around courts. Endless files of

two-wheeled carts rolled northward, bearing each its ten square bales of tea, or its well-packed bolts of silk. The merchants grew wealthy in the rapidly swelling trade.

A great Chinese embassy, headed by the third ranking official of the Peking Foreign Office, made its way to Moscow to keep permanent the relations of the two empires. Similarly, a Russian embassy was established in the rebuilt compound in Peking, where a new church arose, whose archimandrite gained a comfortable revenue by selling ikons and crucifixes to the many Chinese converts he had baptized.

Catherine the Second's edict opened to all Russians the freedom of Chinese trade. Its volume, large before, became now even greater. In 1780 the registered commerce at Kiahta had risen to 2,868,333 roubles, not to mention the large value of the goods taken in unregistered.

Tea, a pound of which, if of best quality, cost two roubles in those days, silks, porcelains, cottons, and tobacco, went north, exchanged for Russian peltries, for cloth, hardware, and, curiously enough, hunting-dogs.

An English merchant, who had penetrated to Kiahta in that year, gives an amusing account of the mutual distrust with which the barter was conducted. The Russian going over the frontier to Maimachen would examine the goods in the Chinese warehouse, seal up what he desired, and leave two

men on guard. The Chinese merchant would then come to Kiahta, and do the same with the Russian's wares. When the bargain was struck, both together carried one shipment over the border with guards and brought back the exchange.

In growing prosperity, undisturbed, the Kiahta caravans came and went, while elsewhere history was warm in the making.

Napoleon marched to Moscow, to Leipsic, to Waterloo. The Kiahta caravans came and went. The St. Petersburg Dekabrists rose for Constantine and the Constitution. The Kiahta caravans came and went. The Crimean War saw the Russian flag flutter down at Sevastopol. Even as the Malakoff was stormed, a Russian army marched into Central Asia to seize the Zailust Altai slope, which points as a spear toward Turkestan and India, and a Russian navy sailed under Muraviev to occupy the fobidden Amur. The Kiahta caravans came and went.

At length a railroad, pushed year by year, reached the Pacific. One branch cut across the reluctantly-accorded Manchurian domain to Vladivostok; another struck southward to Dalny and Niu-chwang. The Russian Eagles perched at Port Arthur and nested by the far Pacific.

The camel-commerce of the old overland road across Mongolia shrank now as shrinks a Gobi snow-rivulet under the burning desert sun. The meagre Kiahta caravans became but a gaunt



shadow of the mighty past. Only an intermittent wool-export and a dwindling traffic in tea to the border cities remained of the great tribute of the Urga Road. As trade vanished from their once busy warehouses, the Chinese merchants were troubled. Perhaps to prayer and sacrifice the God of Commerce would relent? So a scarlet temple rose on the hill by Maimachen. Prosperity came suddenly once again, a new trade rolled north over the historic way. The Mongol cart-drivers returned from far Ulasati. The camel-trains, that had scattered south to the trails beyond Shama, gathered back as antelopes herd to a new spring in the desert.

The God of the Red Temple, the God of the Caravan, had sent the Japanese. As the Amban's executioner strikes off a victim's hand, so had the Nipponese lopped away the railroad reaching down to Dalny and Niu-chwang—the road that was breaking the camel-trade a thousand versts beyond, on the old route by Maimachen and Kiahta. Against the Russian control of the Pacific the Japanese had hurled all their gathered might. By battle genius and efficiency the Island soldiers won, and athwart the front of Slavic empire they set their desperate legions. Far more was lost to Russia than men and squandered treasure, far more than prestige and power of place. The enormous stakes, even in the port of Dalny, in the forts of Port Arthur, in the East China Railway, were but incidents. The real tragedy of the war was that the vital terminus

of her continent railroad was alienated, and that her civilization was barred back indefinitely.

The soldiers and statesmen who carried Russia's power across a savage continent had sought out many inventions. But by whatever means each successive territory was won, its maintenance had been by the warrant that the Slavs had gone not lightly, adventuring to conquest, but as an earnest host clearing a way for the homes and the hearths of their race. The colonist had followed the Cossack; cities and villages, railways and telegraphs, had risen behind the armies. The dawn of the twentieth century saw a mighty expanse of Siberia redeemed from a desolate waste to a land of farms and villages, of mines and industries; a native population, once hardly superior to the American Indian, not, like him, displaced and exterminated, but raised side by side with the settlers to a more equitable place than is held by any other subject people in Asia. The Russian advance had brought the establishment of the volunteer fleet plying from far Odessa to Vladivostok, and the completion of the greatest railway enterprise the world has ever seen. It had opened from Europe to the Far East a land-route more important to more people than the water-route discovered by Vasco da Gama. The fruition of a nation's hope was lost when the Eagles went down at Port Arthur.

For those who feast at Russia's cost the reckoning is long. Predecessors not unfamed are worthy of

remembrance: the Tatars who lorded it four hundred years, the Poles whose kings caroused in the Kremlin, the great Emperor, with his Grande Armée, whose stabled horses scarred the walls of St. Basil, the Turks, the Swedes, — all conquerors of yesterday. But long years must take their toll of life and gold before Russia can carry the entrenched lines along the Yalu, and reënter the redoubts hewn in the sterile hills around Port Arthur. The spoils to the victors for the present are unchallenged. The Russian way to China is not now through Manchuria.

But the ancient road of the Kiahta caravans is still unblocked. Here is the shortest route from Europe to the East. Here, through the defiles and the broken foothills of the Gobi Plateau, lies the future redemption of the great unfettered land-route to North China. The Chinese are themselves advancing to anticipate it. They have already built into Kalgan. To this trading-centre across the pale, a Russian railway may yet pass and her colonists make fruitful the unpeopled wilds of Mongolia.

In the cycles of progress old paths are reworn. Pharaoh's canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea was swallowed up under the sands of three thousand years when the Genoans won a way across the Isthmus. Their track was left unsought when the Portuguese showed the route for ships around the Cape. Yet to-day the Strait of Suez is thronged with reborn commerce.



The first American highway to the Western Reserve was superseded by the better avenue of the newly built Erie Canal, yet came to its own again beneath the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio. So, far to the westward of Japan's outpost, the age-old caravan road, with a shadowy fantastic history dim as its dun trail across the desert, may rise to a resurrected glory as a new road to China.

Its greatness is of yesterday and of to-morrow. Unto to-day belongs the quaintness of the cavalcade that passes to and fro along its track. Over the frozen snows of winter and the rocky trails of summer there plod horse and ox and camel, sleigh and wagon and cart, — a broken line of men and beasts. Russian posts thunder past with galloping horses, three abreast. Bands of Cossacks convoy the guarded camel-trains of heavy mail for China. One meets troops of boyish recruits, singing lustily in chorus on the tramp northward, and Mongol carts and flat-featured Buriats on their little shaggy ponies, sleepy wooden villages, forests, steppes, swamps, frozen river-courses, mountain passes.

Through the kaleidoscope of races and peoples one moves in a world-forgotten life, a procession of the ages.

On the threshold of Siberia the traveler has turned back in manner, in ways of thought, in government, in everything, to the past. Go into one of these cities, — you are in the Germany of 1849, with the embers still hot of the fire lighted



CHURCH OF ST. BASIL, MOSCOW

(Ivan the Terrible blinded its architect that he might never duplicate the masterpiece)





by the republican movement of the young men and the industrials. The seeming chance of victory has passed them by. The iron hand is over all. One hears of Siberian Carl Schurzes, fugitives to America and to Switzerland, of the month-lived Chita Republic, of the row of gallows at Verhneudinsk, of the bloody assizes at Krasnoyarsk.

It is as if one lived when citizens gathered in excited groups in the Forum to discuss the news from Philippi; or as if, from the broken masonry of the Tuileries, there stepped out into breathing actuality the five hundred Marseillaises "who know how to die," fronting the red Swiss before the palace of Louis, the King. Here is the reality of friends in hiding, of files of soldiers at each railway-station, of police-examined passports without which one cannot sleep a night in town, of arms forbidden, meetings forbidden, books forbidden, — all things forbidden. Here as there men thought that the new could come only by revolution. Yet one can see, despite all, the germs of improvement and the upward pressures of evolution.

Move further toward the frontier towns, where the relayed horses bring the weekly mail, — you have gone back a hundred and fifty years. You are among our own ancestors of the days of the Stamp Act. Did the General Howe who governs the oblast from his Irkutsk residency overhear the school-boys of Troitzkosavsk as they chant the forbidden *Marseillaise*, he, too, might say that freedom

was in the air. These Siberian frontiersmen shoot the deer with their permitted flint-locks as straight as the neighbors of Israel Putnam, and with spear and gun they face the bear that the dusky Buriat hunters have tracked to its lair.

Our Puritans are there, rugged, red-bearded dissenters, "Stare' Obriachi," Old Believers, they are called, who came to Siberia rather than use Bishop Nikon's amended books of prayer. Yankee-like, outspoken, keen at a trade, are these big Siberian sons of men who dared greatly in their long frozen march. The grants to Lord Baltimores and Padroon Van Rensselaers are in the vast "cabinetski" estates of the grand-ducal circle, engulfing domains great as European kingdoms.

Go into one of the villages of the peasants transplanted in a body by the paternal Government. Here are the patient, enduring recruits for the army, brothers to the toilers over whose fields the Grand Monarch's wars rolled back and forth. Though steeped in ignorance and overwhelmed by the incubus of communism, they are capable of real and splendid manhood, and will show it when their world has struggled through into the century in which we others live.

Go to a mining-camp in the Chickoya Valley. It is California and the days of '49. Histories as romantic as those of the Sierras are being lived out in its unsung gorges, — tales of hardships, of grubstakes, of bonanzas in Last Chance Gulches.

When the bumping tarantass rolls across the Chinese frontier into Mongolia, it enters a kingdom of the Middle Ages flung down into the twentieth century. Feudal princes, lords of armies weaponed with spear and bow, tax and drive to the corvée their nomad serfs. A hierarchy of priests whose divine head lives in a palace at Holy Urga, sways the multitude of superstition-steeped Mongols, and receives the homage of pilgrims wending their way from Siberia, from the Volga, from Tibet, from all Mongolia, to their Canterbury of Lamaism. In prostrate devotion the penitents girdle the Sacred City before whose hovels beggars dispute with dogs their common nourishment, and in whose compounds princes of the race of Genghis Khan, with armies of retainers, live bedless, bathless, lightless, in the felt huts of their race. Squalid magnificence and good-humored kindly hospitality are linked to utter brutality. Sable-furs and silks cover sheepskins worn until they drop from the body. Here and there among the natives a Chinese trading caravan-sary, alien, walled, peculiar, stands as of old the Hansa-town, with merchant guilds and far-brought caravan goods.

A way of adventure and strangeness, where the years turn back, is this old road of the Golden Horde, leading down past the ancestral homes of the Turks to the Great Wall.

The Cossack sentries at Kiahta look Chinaward. They have become an anomaly, this hard-riding,



fierce-fighting soldier class. The plow has metamorphosed into myriad farms the plains along the Don where once their ponies grazed. Mining-cuts score the hills in the Urals where once they hunted. Villages of Slavonic peasants rise along the Amur. The sons of the old warriors grow into peaceful farmer-folk, differing in name alone from their blue-eyed neighbors. Soon they must disappear in all save picturesquely uniformed Hussars of the Guard, and as a memory, chanted by young men and girls in the Siberian summer evenings when Yermak's song is raised. The task of the Cossack, to lead in the conquest of kindred native races and to weld these through themselves into Russia's fabric, is nearly done.

Down the ancient road lies a last avenue of advance. Eastward is Manchuria, where artillery and science grappling must decide the day with Japan. Southward is India, where England's guarded gateway among the hills can be opened only from behind. But into Mongolia Fate may decree that the yellow-capped Cossacks, drafted from Russia's Mongol Buriats, shall lead once more the nation-absorbing march of the White Czar. For another memorable ride, the Cossacks, who on their shaggy ponies led the long conquering way across the continent, may yet mount and take the road to China.

## II

### THE GREAT SIBERIAN RAILWAY

HOW long to Irkutsk? Seven days now, seven years when last I came." The bearded Russian standing in the doorway of the adjoining compartment in the corridor-car of the Siberian Express gazes thoughtfully at the fir-covered slope, whose dark green stands in sombre contrast to the winter snows. The train is slowly climbing the Ural Range, toward the granite pyramid near Zlatoust, on opposite sides of which are graven "Europe" and "Asia." Neighbors with easy sociability are conversing along the wide corridors, exchanging stories and cigarettes, asking each other's age and income in naïve Siberian style.

Regarding the burly occupant of the next state-room one may discreetly speculate. From sable-lined paletot and massive gold chains you hazard that he voyaged with the traders' slow caravans in the days before the railway — that he was a merchant.

"A merchant? *Optovi?* No, I did not come with the caravans."

From the triangle of red lapel-ribbon, the rank-bestowing decoration, you venture a second guess.

"Perhaps the *gaspadine* made the great circuit

## 26 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

to oversee the local administrations? He was a government inspector—*Revizor*?"

"*Chinovnik niet navierno*," he answers. Most decidedly he was not an official. The suggestion causes him to smile broadly. "I was with the convicts," he says.

Beside the line of rails curves the old post-road winding like a ribbon through the highlands.

"It was by that road we marched. Seven years of my life lie along it."

The train swings through a cleft hewn in the living rock, steep-sided as if the mountain had been gashed with a mighty axe. It rumbles around the base of an overhanging crag while you look clear down over the white valley, with the miles of rolling green forest beyond.

"Was not seven years a long time for the march?" you venture.

"For a traveler, yes; for convict bands not unusual. We went back and forth, now northward a thousand versts as to Archangel, now west as to Moscow, now south as to Rostov. Again and again our troop would split, and part be sent another way. New prisoners would be added, from Warsaw, Finland, Samara. New guards would take charge. Some groups would go to the West Siberian stations, some east to the Pacific and Sakhalin. I, who was written down for ten years at the Petrovski Works beyond Baikal Lake, with a third commuted for good behavior, had finished my term before I got there."



"Why did they wander so aimlessly?"

"It seems truly as a butterfly's flight, but you others do not know the way of Russia. Very slowly, very deviously she goes, but surely, none the less, to her goal. We each came at last to our place."

A match flares up and he lights another cigarette.

"Shall we not go to the 'wagon restoran' for a glass of tea?" you ask.

Along the broad aisles you walk, past the state-rooms, filled with baggage, littered with bedding, kettles, novels, and fur overcoats. Everything is in direst confusion, and the owners are sandwiched precariously between their belongings. On the little tables which are raised between the seats, they are playing endless games of cards, sipping tea and nonchalantly smoking cigarettes the while. You pass the stove-niches at the car entrances, heaped to the ceiling with cut wood. The fire-tenders as you pass give the military salute. You cross the covered bridges between the cars, where are little mounds of the snow that has sifted in around the crevices; and a belt of cold air tells of the zero temperature outside. At length the double doors of the foremost car appear ahead, and crossing one more arctic zone over the couplings, you can hang your fur cap by the door and salute the ikon that with ever-burning lamp looks down over the parlor-car. Now you can sit on the broad sofa set along the wall, or doze in the corner-rocker under the bookcase, or sit tête-à-tête in armchairs over

a miniature table. Ladies here, as well as men, are chatting, reading, and smoking, for this combination parlor, *fumoir*, and dining-room is for all, not a resort to which the masculine element shamefacedly steals for unshared indulgences.

"*Dva stakan chai, pajolst*" (two glasses of tea, please), your friend says to the aproned *chelaviek*, a Tatar from Kazan.

"*Stakan vodka*," you add; for you are willing to contribute twenty kopecks to the government revenues if this beverage will help out the memoirs of your friend, the convict.

"*Say chass*," replies the waiter, which means, literally, "this hour," figuratively, "at once," actually, whenever he chances to recall that your party wants a glass of tea and another of vodka. When at length the refreshments have come, your companion gets gradually back to the reminiscences.

"Were your comrades many on that march?"

"Twenty-six from my school in Odessa," he says. He tells of the tumult in the Polytechnic Academy, when he was a boy of sixteen studying engineering; of the barricade which the students threw up; of the soldiers sent against it; of an officer wounded with a stone, and the sentence to the mines. He tells of the journey, day after day, the miserable company trudging under the burning suns of summer and shivering under the biting cold of winter, ill-fed and in rags. He recalls how this friend and that friend

sickened and died ; how a peasant-woman gave him a dried fish ; how one of the criminals tried to escape and was lashed with the *plet* until he fainted beneath its strokes.

“ We were a sad procession. First came the Cossacks on their ponies, with their carbines and sabres. Then the murderers for Sakhalin, and the dangerous criminals in fetters ; a few women next ; then we, the politicals ; last, more soldiers marching behind. Far to the rear came carts and wagons with the wives and families of the prisoners, following their men into exile. Slowly we went, scarcely more than fifteen versts a day, with a rest one day out of three, for the women. In winter we camped in stations along the road.”

From the comfortable leather armchairs they seem infinitely distant and dream-like, these tales from the dark ages of Siberia. The speaker seems to have forgotten his auditor and to be talking to himself, and soon he relapses into silence. He sits holding his glass of lemon-garnished tea, like a resting giant with his shaggy beard and mighty chest. The drag of the brakes is felt through the train. “ *Desiet minute stoit* ” (ten minutes’ stop), somebody calls out. Suddenly, with an effort, the man across the table rouses from his reverie, and looks about the car, when the broad smile comes back and he says earnestly : —

“ You must not think of that as the true Siberia. It was all long ago — thirty-five years. And you



see I who became a *kayoshnik*, a gold-seeker, have prospered, and work many mines. I am glad now that they sent me to Siberia. And many others prosper who came with the convicts. The old dark Siberia dies, but our new Siberia of the railroad lives, and grows great."

He rises resolutely and shakes your hand with a vise-like grip.

"*De svidania!*" (Till we meet again.)

You rise with the rest, draw on your fur cap and gloves, work into the heavy fur-lined overcoat, and clamber down to the platform. A little wooden station-house painted white is opposite the carriage door. It has projecting eaves and quaint many-paned windows. In front of it is a post with a large brazen bell. On the big signboard you can spell out from the Russian letters "Zlatoust." This is the summit station of the pass that crosses the Urals. Around are standing stolid sheep-skinned figures, bearded peasants just in from their sledges, which are ranked outside the fence. Fur-capped mechanics, carrying wrenches and hammers, move from car to car to tighten bolts and test wheels for the long eastward pull. Uniformed station attendants are here and there, some with files of bills of lading. As you walk down the platform among the crowd, you come upon a soldier, duffle-coated and muffled in his capote, standing stoically with fixed bayonet. Forty paces further there is another, and beyond still another, all the length of the platform, and far

up the line. What a symbol of Russian rule are these silent sentries! And what a mute tale is told in the necessity for a guard at every railroad halting-place in the Empire!

You stroll along toward the engine. Huge and box-like are the big steel cars, five of which compose the train. Two second-class wagons painted in mustard yellow are rearmost, then come the first-class, painted black, next the "wagon restoran" and the luggage-van, where the much advertised and little used bath-room and gymnasium are located. The engine is a big machine, but of low power, unable to make much speed; and the high grades and the road-bed, poor in many places, additionally limit progress. It is apparent why the train rarely moves at a rate greater than twenty miles an hour.

At first you do not notice the cold. But now that you have walked for a few minutes along the platform, it seems to gather itself for an attack, as if it had a personality. You draw erect with tense muscles, for the system sets itself instinctively on guard. The light breeze that stirs begins to smart and sting like lashes across the face. The hand drawn for a moment from the fleece-lined glove, stiffens into numbed uselessness. As you march rapidly up and down the platform, an involuntary shiver shakes you from head to foot. A fellow passenger, remarking it, observes: —

"It is not cold to-day, in fact, quite warm. *Ochen jarko.*"

You walk together to the big thermometer that hangs by the station-door. It is marked with the Réaumur Scale, and your brain is too torpid for multiplications. But the slightly built official, known as a government engineer by green-bordered uniform and crossed hammers on his cap, is inspecting the mercury also.

"Eight degrees below zero Fahrenheit," he says. "Quite warm for January. It is often thirty-five degrees below zero here in the Uralsk."

It gets colder at the suggestion. The three starting-bells ring, and everybody scrambles into the compartments.

The express rolls onward down the Urals. You stroll back to the warm dining-room and idly watch the groups around. Across the way is an elderly mild-looking officer, whose gold epaulettes, zig-zagged with silver furrows, are the insignia of a major-general. He smokes endless cigarettes in company with another officer lesser in degree, a major, decorated with the Russo-Japanese service-medal, smart of carriage and alert of look. By the window beyond is a young German, gazing meditatively at the hills and the snow through the bottom of a glass of Riga beer. A rather bright-mannered dame, with rings on her fingers and long pendants in her ears, chats vivaciously in French with a phlegmatic-looking personage in a tight-fitting blue coat which buttons up to his throat like a fencer's jacket. A quietly-dressed gentleman, evidently in civil life,



is reading one of the library copies of de Maupassant.

Outside, cut and tunnel, hill, slope, and valley, green forest, white drifted snow, and bare craggy rocks, the Urals glide past. The little track-wardens' stations beside the way snap back as if jerked by a sudden hand, and the telegraph-poles catch up in endless monotony the sagging wires.

The Tatar waiter goes from place to place, clearing off the ashes and the glasses, and getting ready for dinner. There is a table-d'hôte repast, the Russian *obeid*, a meal which starts with a fiery vodka gulp any time after noon, and tails off in the falling shadows of the winter sunset with tea and cigarettes. Or, if one wishes, he may press the bell, labeled in the Græco-Slavonic lettering, "Buffet," and dine à la carte.

"Il vaut mieux essayer le repas Russe," says the quiet reader of de Maupassant, joining you.

He is duly thanked for the advice, and we beckon to the aproned waiter. At once the latter passes the countersign kitchenward to set the meal in motion, and puts before us the little liqueur-glasses and the bottle of vodka. While we still gasp and blink over this, he has gotten the cold *zakuska* of black rye-bread and butter, *sardinka*, salty *beluga*, and cold ham, and has started us on the first course. Then comes in, after the omni-inclusive *zakuska*, a big pot of cabbage-soup which we are to season with a swimming spoonful of thick sour cream. The

chunky pieces of half-boiled meat floating in it are left high and dry by the consumption of the liquid. The meat becomes the third course, which we garnish with mustard and taste.

"Voyons!" the Frenchman observes. "Of the Russian cuisine and its method of preparing certain food-substances one may not approve. Frankly it calls for the sauce of a prodigious appetite. But contemplating the *obeid* as an institution so evolved as to fit into the general scheme of life, it finds merit. The Russian meal is a guide to Russian character."

"What signifies this mélange of raw fish, eggs, and great slices of flesh, and mush of cabbage-soup?"

"Not that the Russian has no taste. It is that he sacrifices his finer susceptibilities to his love of freedom. A regular hour for meals would seem to him a sacrifice of his leisure and convenience to that of the cook. The guiding principle of the national cuisine is that all dishes must be capable of being served at any time that the eater feels disposed."

This is a problem to put to any kitchen, we allow. Napoleon's chef met it by relays of roasting chickens. But one cannot keep half a dozen fowl going for each household of the one hundred and forty million inhabitants of Russia. Thus sturgeon is provided, and sterlet, parboiled so that it tastes like blotting-paper; and the filet that is called "biftek," and the oil-sodden "Hamburger," that is

dubbed "filet." These can be started at nine in the morning, and be removed at any time between that hour and nine at night, without any appreciable change in taste or texture. The cook of the restaurant, like his brethren of the Empire, has laid his professional conscience sacrificially upon the national altar of unfettered meals. If the *obeid* is not a triumph in culinary art, it is at least a signal example of domestic generalship.

We have advanced without a hitch to roast partridge, with sugared cranberries, which our friend washes down with good red wine from the Imperial Crimean estates. We get through a hard German-like apple-tart, and reach the last item of cheese.

When the mighty meal is over, we order tea, light cigarettes, and lean back in the armchairs to chat and note how our neighbors are getting through the time.

At the far end of the room a Russian has joined the French lady and her escort. They are celebrating some occasion that requires heaping bumpers of champagne. The babble of their conversation is in the air. It seems to refer to the comparative appreciation of histrionic talent in Rouen and Vladivostok!

Somebody is being treated to a dressing-down in the latest Parisian argot. "Ces sont des betteraves là-bas!" one hears scornfully above the murmurs.

Across the way some Germans are engaged with beer-schooners. One of them gets excited and brings



his fist down upon the table. "Arbeit in Sibirien nimmer geendet ist; they always want more advice about their gas-plants."

In the lull that follows the explosion, a gentle English voice floats past from the seat behind us. "And so I told him that the station had nearly enough funds, but we needed workers, more workers." It is the English medical missionary on his way to Shanta-fu, discussing China with the American mining-engineer, bound for Nerchinsk.

The piano, under the corner ikon with its ever-burning lamp, tinkles out suddenly, and a man's voice starts up —

You can hear the girls declare,  
He must be a millionaire.

He misses a note every now and then, which does not embarrass him in the least. Caroling gayly to his own accompaniment, he forges ahead. The crowd in the armchairs around the room, consuming weak tea or strong beer, and smoking, all join with an untroubled accord and versatile accents, French, English, and Russian, in the blaring chorus, "The man that broke the bank at Monte Carlo."

The train rocks faster on the falling grade; little by little the mountains drop away; gradually the mighty forests become dwarfed into scattered clumps of straggly birches, and the great trees dwindle into bushes; lower and still lower fall the hills, until all is flat. As far as the eye can see are the snow-covered

wastes, treeless, houseless, lifeless. The lowest foothills of the Urals have been passed. It is the beginning of the great steppes.

Slowly the daylight wanes. The gray darkness deepens steadily; it seems to gather in over the gliding snow, and the peculiar gloom of a Siberian winter's night closes down. At each track-guard's post flash with vivid suddenness the little twinkling lanterns of the wardens of the road. Involuntarily conversation becomes less animated and voices are lowered; the spell of the sombreness is over all.

Soon the electric lamps are lighted, and from brazen ikon and sparkling glasses flash reflections of their glitter. Curtains are drawn, which shut out the enshrouding blackness. The piano begins tinkling again; the waiters come and go with tea and liqueurs; the babble of conversation rises; and the idle laughter is heard anew. Darkness may be ahead, behind, and beside, but within there is light — enjoy it.

The train slows for a halt. Station-lamps shine mistily through the brooding night. Lanterns bob to and fro on the platform as fur-capped train-hands pass, tapping wheels and opening journal-boxes. At each door a fire-tender is catching and stowing away the wood which a peasant in padded sheepskins is tossing up from his hand-sled below. It is Chelliabinsk, whose old importance as the clearing-house of the convicts has been passed on to the new city of the railroad. Here the just com-

pleted northern branch, linking Perm to Petersburg, meets the old southern line from Samara and Moscow.

A short stop and the train moves on again. The day is done and gradually each saunters into his own warm compartment, which the width of the Russian gauge makes as large as a real room. One can read at the table by the window, under the electric drop-light, or, propped in pillows, one can stretch out luxuriously on the easy couch that is nightly manœuvred into an upper and lower berth. Practically always after crossing the Urals, the number of passengers has so thinned out that each may have a stateroom to himself.

Presently you push the bell labeled, "Konduktor." A uniformed attendant appears standing at the salute. "*Spate*" (sleep) is sufficient direction. The sheets and pillows are dug out and the transformation of the couch into a bed is effected. "*Spacoiné notche*" (good-night) he says, and you fall asleep to the rhythmic throb of the engine.

During the following hours the train enters the Tobolsk Government, the oldest province of Siberia, whose 439,859 square miles of area, nearly four times as large as Prussia, extend roughly from the railroad northward to the Arctic Ocean, and from the Urals eastward so as to include the lower basin of the Ob-Irtish river system. This ancient province has seen much of Siberia's history, whose predominant features have been two, growth and graft.





BRIDGE OVER THE IRTISH



ALONG THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY



Out of evil, somehow, in a marvelous way has been coming good. In the earliest days, with what smug satisfaction did the Stroganovs find that the native inhabitants would trade ermine for glass beads! Yet the fruit of their sharp dealing and purchased protection and special privilege was the expedition that won Sibir, founded Tobolsk, and opened to Russia the way into northern Asia. The imperial commissioner who came to Tobolsk shortly after Kutchum Khan's overthrow, to collect the yassak tribute of ten sable-skins for each married man and five for each bachelor, was detected culling the choice skins for himself, and substituting cheap ones for his master. But his agents had sought out the paths and extended the Russian Empire far into the northern forests.

By despotic oppression the inhabitants of Uglitch town, condemned for testifying to the murder of Dimitri, the Czarevitch, came here into exile in 1593, carrying with them the tocsin-bell that had tolled alarm when the Czar wished silence. But they, together with the deported laborers settled by the same arbitrary will along the Tobol River, started the permanent settlement of the new realm.

A succeeding functionary called on the natives for a special tribute of ermine for the Czarina's mantle. He collected so many bales of it that the taxed began to wonder at the stature of the "Little Mother," and sent a special deputy to Petersburg. The legate discovered that the Empress was as



other women, and on his disclosures the official was unable to save his own, let alone the ermines' skins. Yet while the governor was plundering the fur-merchants of Tobolsk, the frontiers were extending, until by 1700 they reached eastward to Kamchatka and Lake Baikal, southeast to the Altai foothills at Kuznetz, and north to the Arctic Ocean.

At Tobolsk in 1710 Peter the Great established the capital of his reorganized province of Siberia. Prince Gagarin, whom he appointed its first governor, found here a systemless extortion unworthy of an efficient statesman. With the thoroughness of genius he built up in the unhappy province a regular organization of rascality. His pickets patrolled the roads into Russia, to prevent the escape of those who might carry the tale of his oppression. He arranged with high officials at Court that any petitioners who evaded this frontier net should be handed over to an appropriate committee. Thus fortified, he began collections of as much as could be wrung from his luckless subjects. Every traveler paid Gagarin's tariff, every farmer sent him presents of stock, every trapper forwarded the best of his catch. The fur-trader's donations and the merchants' loans were assisted into Gagarin's warehouses by thumbscrew and thonged knout.

While these things passed in Tobolsk there came periodically to Petersburg delegations of outwardly contented citizens attesting the wisdom of their governor. They brought to the Czar and the Grand

Dukes, in addition to the punctiliously rendered tax yassak, gifts of especially fine furs. Such was the completeness of Gagarin's control that not an echo of the true state of affairs reached the ears of the astute Peter.

At length, in 1719, Nesterov, the Minister of Finance, was privately approached by some Tobolsk merchants and was supplied with evidence sufficient to hang half the officials in Siberia. In a dramatic presentation the Minister furnished this to the Imperial Senate, showing so bad a case that Gagarin's own agents in the ducal circle rose up against him. The Czar sent Licharev, a major of the Guard, to Siberia, to proclaim in every town and hamlet that Gagarin was a criminal in the eyes of the Emperor. As this messenger approached Tobolsk, official after official came out to turn state's evidence, trying to assure his personal safety. The highways to Russia were guarded by Peter's own troops, with orders to seize all outgoing travelers who might be transporting Gagarin's accumulated spoil, which with commendable prudence the Czar had allocated to himself.

When Peter was in England he had remarked casually to an acquaintance, "In my realm I have only two lawyers, and one of these I intend to hang as soon as I get back." It was particularly unfortunate for this ex-governor that the remainder of the legal profession did not feel himself called upon to explain to Peter the Gagarin campaign contributions. No one ever needed an attorney more. He

was under trial before an imperial judge who did not know a technicality from a tort, and whose preliminary procedure was to order a reliable gallows.

For some score of years subsequent to Gagarin, the governors of Siberia were, in any event, moderate. The province grew apace, increased by exiles, by land-seeking colonists, by raskalniks, — nonconformists of the Greek Church, self-called "Old Believers," — who preferred to come to Siberia rather than follow Peter's orders and shave off their beards.

Then Chicherin the Magnificent came. His life was a round of celebrations. Wonderful stews he concocted for his sybaritic revels. At *obeid* an orchestra of thirty pieces supplied the music. Artillery in front of the residency saluted him with salvos when he drove out. In Butter-Week all Tobolsk drank the spirits which their governor bountifully provided. It is hardly necessary to say that the money for these entertainments did not come from Chicherin's private purse: the city merchants groaned over forced loans and benevolences; and at last their cry reached the throne, and Chicherin too was removed.

With his passing, the Tobolsk Province fell to less spectacular rulers, but under good and bad it grew steadily, until in 1860 there were a million inhabitants within its borders, a population which at the present time has risen to a million and a half. Some forty thousand of these are exiles; some eighty



thousand raskalniks; and forty thousand Tatars, who feed the flocks where their ancestors once bore sway, living peacefully side by side with the Russians. Some fifteen thousand are descendants of the Samoieds and Voguls with whom the first Stroganov from the adjoining Russian province of Archangel traded his wares. Some twenty thousand are Ostiaks whose forebears were alternately allies and enemies of Yermak.

The capital city, Tobolsk, on the Tobol River hard-by its junction with the Irtish, has grown from a precariously held camp of two hundred and fifty fugitive Cossack soldiers to a city of thirty thousand. Tiumen, the easterly city on the Tura River, another of Yermak's camps, has grown into a great distributing-centre for produce brought by the river-highways. From the railway line northward as far as the city of Tobolsk extends a farm-belt, a continuation of the black-earth region of great Russia. The fertility of the land may be judged by the number of villages met as the train speeds on, and the large proportion of enclosed fields on both sides of the track. Some of the finest agricultural soil in the world lies here, such soil as composes the prairies of Minnesota and Dakota. Three million head of live stock graze in the district, which has a yearly production of ten million hundredweight of wheat alone, four million of rye, and nine million of oats. Five million more settlers may live and thrive, and the harvest will feed the ever-growing

cities of Europe when Siberia comes to be the new granary of the old world. The stress and turmoil of Tobolsk are passed. Happy the people who have no annals!

Gradually, as the train rolls eastward beyond the Ishim River Valley, the farm country opens out into the unfenced prairie of the Great Steppe. The clustered wooden villages that flanked the line through Tobolsk appear less and less frequently, till at last we seem to glide over an immense white sea, frozen into perpetual calm and silence. Here and there a gray thicket of stunted trees and bushes, here and there a grove of naked-limbed birches, mutely exhibit Nature's desolation.

As the sullen landscape bares itself, one thinks of the prison caravans tramping these wastes; of the early neglected garrisons which Elizabeth's favorite General Kinderman proposed to victual on crushed birch-bark and relieve the Crown of their expense; of all the misery and the wrong that the steppes of Siberia have symbolized. No sign of man's handiwork or of Nature's kindness is seen, — only the cold snow and the bare birches, while regularly as the ticking of a clock the telegraph-poles and the verst-spaced stations snap back into the wastes. The dominant reflection is not, how great is the achievement which has mastered these steppes! but, how infinitesimal is all that man has done in this ocean of untrodden snow! Hour after hour we are driving on. Yet never is there passed a landmark



to conjure into imagination a picture of progress. One moves as in a nightmare, where he runs for seeming ages, hunted forward, yet can never stir from the spot. The horizon-bounded circle of vision is as the ever-receding rim of a giant dome, the rails ahead and behind bisecting its white immensity. Above, the vast bowl of the blue sky dips and meets it, imprisoning us. Where are the fields and villages; the bustling activity of human life that tells of man's mastership? Hour after hour passes without a change in the drear monotony of the landscape; for miles on miles not a trace is seen of human dominion. Grim Nature spreading her shroud over plain and pasture is despot here, and Winter is ruler of the Siberian Steppe.

One could ride due south a thousand versts, through Golodnia the "hunger steppe" to the borders of Turkestan, and find the same monotonous plain, snow-covered save where the dryness of the south has thinned its fall. One could ride from the Caspian Sea due east to China, with each day's march a counterpart of the rest. Five hundred thousand square miles of area are covered with grass and gaudy flowers in the spring, with low brush and green reeds where the salt swamp-lakes receive the tribute of snow-fed streams. In midsummer the growing grass scorches under a heat of 104°. In winter snow is everywhere, —in feathery flakes that the midday sun does not soften during whole months of a cold which is a ferocity. Thirty to forty degrees below



zero is not unusual, and the land is swept by bitter winds that pierce like daggers through doubled furs and felts. Yet there dwell on the central plateau of Asia a million people, and one million cattle and three million sheep are scattered over the tremendous range. As the herds have become hardened through the centuries and survive in measure despite the severity, so also have the men. From the train-windows now one may chance to see infrequent straggling herds of long-horned cattle, lean and gaunt, scratching away the snow in search of food. Mounted on little shaggy ponies are figures buried in skins, who keep guard over them.

One detects a new type among the crowds at the stations, — flat faces, round eyes, square thickset bodies. Here on the borderland, the old race has fused with the Slav and has become metamorphosed. The sons of the Tatars, whose very name was distorted into that of a dweller in Tartarus by those who feared their fierce valor, have become shopkeepers, train-hands, waiters, and butchers, who come to sell meat and milk to the chef of the wagon restoran. Sometimes, at the stops, figures, gnome-like in enveloping red capote and grotesquely padded furs, hold their ponies with jealous rein, staring curiously at the locomotive and passengers.

Looking long from the windows at this steppe, a drowsy hypnotism steals over the mind — a dull stupor of unbroken monotony. It is better to do as the Russians — pay no attention whatever to the



DINING-CAR SALOON, VIEW OF THE LIBRARY





landscape outside, but make the most of the life within the moving caravansary, — cards and cigarettes and liqueurs, tea and endless talk, with yarns that take days for the spinning.

The uniformed judge, passing by, joins you. He is traveling to a new appointment with his swarming family of children, shawl-decked females of unknown quality and quantity, the household bedding, and the ancestral samovar, all crowded into one stifling compartment. He discusses volubly the confusions of the Code, and propounds a unique theory of his own as to Russian jurisprudence, to the effect that all the best laws of other nations have been adopted, with none of the old or conflicting enactments repealed. The general drops into the circle. He is interesting when one has pierced the crust, but dogmatic. At every station the soldiers of the garrison, not on sentry-duty, jump to one side, swing half-around, and stand at the salute until he passes, to the huge inconvenience of the porters. He would undoubtedly vote the Democratic ticket to repay Mr. Roosevelt for putting Russia under the alternative of stopping the war perforce, or forfeiting sympathy, when Japan was said to be breaking under the strain.

“Russia was beaten this time. What of it? *Nietchevo!*” says the general.

“*Nietchevo,*” we echo, as we sip our tea.

“But the Japanese are wily insects,” observes his companion, the young service-medaled major. “I

## 48 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

was in Vladivostok when our prisoners came back. They tried to get money for the checks the Japanese had given them. That was how the big mutiny began. You know, when our men were taken captive, the Japanese treated them very well, much good food, vodka, let them write home all about it, and gave them enormous pay, six yen, three dollars a month, charging the expense all up to the Czar for after the war. When at last the prisoners were to be released, the Japanese promised every man double pay, twelve roubles. But they gave them the money? No, the insects gave them each an order payable by the Russian commander in Vladivostok. So the transports came, and these men were sent ashore with these checks in their hands, and they went up to the commandant of the city, and asked for their cash that the Japanese had promised. What money did the commandant have for them? What could he do? He ordered them to go away. So they stood and discussed on the street-corners. And more men still came from the transports. Then they said, 'We will ask the general of the forts.' So they marched to the forts in a big crowd, and the general he also told them to go away. For a long time they talked and they persuaded the sailors to help them. So they went again to the forts, and the sailors shot at the forts, and the general ordered the artillery to shoot. But the artillery would not, so the men broke in and killed the officers and got arms and went back to the city commander. Him,



too, they killed, and all Vladivostok was in mutiny for two weeks. Not an officer dared show himself. General Orlov persuaded them to let him into the town. Then many were shot, but at last the city was quiet. The Japanese are very sly insects."

His story ends and the two officers go back to join their families. The train throbs on across the steppe.

The German gas-plant drummer, with his new Far Eastern outfit, is gathering from the missionary doctor details of treaty-port life, which are being treasured up as valuable reference data. The French fur-merchant dips back into his library copy of de Maupassant.

The rigor of the outside scene seems at length to be changing. A few scattered houses appear, and trees and fenced fields, and villages, with curling smoke rising from the chimneys. Men and children are walking about, and finally we come to the Irtysh River, over which the train rumbles on a half-mile bridge. Spires and gilt domes are visible, dark wooden houses, and bright white-painted churches with green roofs. Droshkies and carts are passing in the streets, and presently we draw up to the station of Omsk, the second city of Siberia.

The junction of the Trans-Siberian Railway with the Irtysh River, which is 2520 miles long and open from April to October, would of itself make Omsk a centre of great strategic importance. But in addition to this main river-highway, which is navigated by some hundred and fifty steamers, there are afflu-



ents by which one can sail from the Urals to the Altai, from the Arctic Ocean to China, and these lines of communication centre here.

From Omsk, following the Irtysh down past Tobolsk, one can steam by the Obi to Obdorsk, within the Arctic Circle. Indeed, a regular grain-export service was planned via the Kara Sea to London by an ambitious Englishman. It failed after some promise of success, because of the ice-packs in the Gulf of Obi. From Omsk, following the Irtysh upstream, steamer navigation extends as far as Semipalatinsk, in the Altai foothills. Smaller craft may go nearly to the Chinese frontier.

By the Tobol and Tura rivers, Tiumen, in the Ural foothills, may be reached, four hundred and twenty miles from Semipalatinsk. By ascending the Obi, a boat may go fourteen hundred and eighty miles east from Tiumen to Kuznetz on the Tom; through a canal from an Obi confluent the Yenesei River System may be entered, and from it by a short portage the Lena System. In all twenty-eight thousand miles are navigable by small craft, and seven thousand miles by steamer. Omsk is the pulsing heart of this mighty interior waterway system.

The train leaves the station, which is at a distance from the town, and once more we are en route. The eye rests gratefully upon the ribbon of cultivated fields which follow the Irtysh down. But we reënter the steppe, and again the desolation set-



TYUMEN



TOMSK



PERM

CITIES OF NEW RUSSIA





ties over all. In hours of looking, not a habitation is seen, not an animal, not a tree, — only the same white billows. This Barbara district in the Tomsk Government has an area of fifty thousand square miles. Kainsk, some seven hundred versts from Chelliabinsk, is the centre. The section, though covered with the fertile black earth of the adjoining regions, is, owing to lack of drainage and adequate rainfall, arid and almost untilled.

The round-faced civilian from the compartment further up, whose familiarity with the country has made him a welcome accession, joins us at the window. He looks out over the level plain of the Barbara Steppe with manifest satisfaction.

“You admire the landscape?” we ask satirically.

He smiles. “We got big money when the line went through here. I made my first fortune then.”

He sighs at the memory of old times, and tells of the railway-building days when the Czar had given the order for a road across the continent, and the soldiers of fortune, of whom he was one, had gathered to the task.

“Not a kopeck had I when the Dreyfus brothers made their big speculation in Argentine wheat and went down, leaving us young clerks stranded in Kiev. You know Kiev? Great pilgrimages come there to see the bodies of Joseph and his brethren, all preserved just as when they died. We heard by accident of a grading job under a big contractor out here. None of us knew anything about construction,

but three of us grain-clerks wrote a letter saying we would put the work through, and started. We had just enough money to get to Samara. In Samara was a merchant much esteemed, whom I went to see. He went on our bond, never having seen us before, and gave us enough money to come. So it was in the old days. The country was flat as a board. We had but to lay down the ties and spike the rails. Thirty versts we made of this line. It cost us thirty thousand roubles a verst, but we got fifty thousand. Would that we might do that now again."

The contractor, his round jolly face glowing with the recital and his eyes shining through gold-rimmed glasses, is entertaining a growing company, for the judge has stopped to gossip, and the railroad official.

"I took my money and bought an estate in the country of the Don Cossacks," the contractor is saying. "I paid ten per cent to the Government for taxes when I bought the land. I had to pay no more taxes then all my life, but my heir would pay taxes, or, if I sold, he who bought would pay. So it was done in the Hataman Government."

"It is just," says the judge. "Why should they, who get the property, not pay taxes?"

The contractor shrugs his shoulder and continues: "For five years I farmed, and though I had a German overseer, I did not prosper. So I went to one of the cities of Russia and thought to put in a tramway. The men of the city said, 'Are all the horses dead? He of the spectacles is mad.' Yet by impor-

tunity I got them to give me the right to make a tramway. There were in Petersburg then many Belgians, with much money, wishing to give it away. So I went to them and said, 'Here is a great franchise, but who will build the line and gain the riches?'

"'We will, we will,' said the Belgians.

"From them I got a hundred and eighty thousand roubles clear, and an interest. I sold the interest quickly to other foreigners, Frenchmen, and went away. Yes, the tramway was built, and the people crowded to ride on it as I had said. But when it was going well, and the profits were yet to come, the people said, 'Shall foreigners oppress our city?' So the town bought the tramways for what they said was the cost, and the Belgians went away. And they did not come back to Russia. Thus were many railways and tramways built and taken. The foreigners will not come back now, and Russians too do not enter these pursuits, lest the Government come after them later. It is *hadoo* (bad)."

"But is it not worse that these men should make a tramway and draw vast money from the people?" says the railroad official. "For me, I think the Government should do it all."

"*Ni snaia*, I don't know," says the contractor. "But I who bought stocks with the Belgians' money (foolishly thinking that the business which I knew not was safe, while that which I knew was shaky), I will not give again to the stock-people the money



I shall make from the oil-fields of Sakhalin, where I go now."

"But," says the railway chinovnik, "does not the State do these things better? Look you at this very railway. For years any who wished might have built into Siberia. An Amerikanski, and Collins, an Angleski, came proposing railroads, but all things slumbered. Then in 1891 the Czar ordered the road to be built, and in ten years we had laid the eight thousand versts to Vladivostok. I read that the line of Canada, where too there are steppes and highlands as ours, took ten years for but half the distance. We made two versts a day for all the years, and they but one. Who other than the Government could spend a billion roubles for a line that will bring money returns only in the far future?"

"Ah, you chinovniks, you say, lo, we do all this! But it was such as I built that road, and because you gave us big money. And is not the money to support it now got from the peasants' taxes while so many clerks and operators waste time in the offices? I have seen a third as many men as at Omsk do the same work. And your trains go as the water-snails, twelve versts an hour for freight, twenty versts an hour for the mail-trains, thirty-five versts for the express. One can go eighty versts in Europe."

"Truly, truly, but why go so fast? It costs more for fuel, and the track has to be made straight. What good does it do you to come in sooner? If a

man is in a hurry to get somewhere, can he not take an earlier train?"

The group mulls over this knotty point of logic, which is complicated by the fact that our own train is twelve hours late. They cite hypothetical men with varying sorts of engagements, and then lightly switch to talk of the nourishing properties of beer, the utility of agricultural machinery, and the old tiger battue of Vladivostok.

The birch groves become more frequent now, pines begin to appear, and at last the country has become forested. Several of the passengers bestir themselves for departure, gathering multitudinous bundles, and making the circuit in demonstrative hand-shaking farewells.

"We come to Taiga, whence they go to the stingy town of Tomsk," the government engineer observes.

"Why do you call it the stingy town of Tomsk?"

"I will tell you. Tomsk, before the railroad came, was the biggest, finest, and wealthiest of our cities. She was the capital of the great Tomsk Gubernia, with three hundred and thirty thousand square miles of area, and a million and a half people. The Tom brought the big river steamers to her wharves. In the city she had sixty thousand inhabitants, increasing every year; a university, Stroganov's Library, a cathedral, fine public buildings. The merchants were rich; the miners came down from the Altai; all things were prospering. When the railway was ordered, the engineers came through

to locate the line. All they asked was a hundred thousand roubles. But how stingy were the people of Tomsk! They had given two million roubles for their university, where the students made speeches and got sent to the Yakutski Oblast, yet they would not give a hundred thousand roubles to the engineers. 'Give fifty, give even forty thousand,' said the engineers. But the people of Tomsk said, 'Are we not the seat of government for all western Siberia? Have we not Yermak's banner in the cathedral? Are we not Tomsk? You must bring the railway here anyway.' But if the engineers had done that, who could say where it would have ended? All the other cities would begin to make excuses. So the grades to Tomsk became suddenly so bad that the line had to be run away south here, eighty-two versts. The station where one changes was named, in mockery, Taiga, 'in the woods.' The merchants flocked out begging the engineers to come back to Tomsk. They offered all that had been asked and much more. They hung around the office and wept over the blue-prints. But how can a professional man change his plans and sacrifice his reputation? One cannot do such things. So Tomsk was left, and her trade now falls far behind that of the other cities, Omsk and Irkutsk. We in Siberia smile at her and call her the stingy city of Tomsk."

"We have, too, another jest, of the Tomsk Czar," chimes in the judge. "There appeared one day there a stranger calling himself Theodore Kuzmilch,



who bought a little house which he never left save to do some act of charity. For years he lived ; then, when he died, the house was turned into a chapel because of his good deeds. Many years after his death, a merchant started the tale that this was the Czar Alexander I, who did not die in the Crimea, but left a false body to be carried to Petersburg and entombed in state. He had, it was told, not really died, and, disappointed at his powerlessness to help his people, had come, self-exiled, to Siberia. But we others laugh at this tale of Tomsk as an imperial residence."

The twenty minutes' stop at Taiga ends, and the train renews its journey through the forests.

With rolling hill and long-stretching forests, the watershed bounding the eastern limits of the Obi Basin is crossed near Achinsk, and the drainage-basin of the mighty Yenesei River, one million three hundred and eighty thousand square miles in area, is entered. It just fails to equal in length the Mississippi-Missouri System. Including the administrative territory "Yeneseik" of the East Siberian Gubernia, the river sweeps from the Chinese borderland north beyond the Arctic Circle. In the far south, where it rises among the Minusink Mountains, the valley country is like the Italian Alps, mild and very fertile. Iron-mines of prehistoric antiquity are found in these valleys, relics of the old Han Dynasty of China.

Of the twenty million bushels of grain produced

throughout the Yeneseik territory, nearly a third comes from the Minusink oasis. The railroad pierces the central plains, farmed in the most favorable spots only, and capable of enormously extended cultivation.

Through alternating forest, field, and plain the train moves on, and crossing the three thousand-foot Yenesei bridge, enters the city of Krasnoyarsk. When we pull out, the engineer, who has been chatting with the erstwhile contractor, observes, "This town was a main hotbed of the great strike. They are well in hand now, but we had our time with them in 1905. Even I knew nothing of what had been prepared."

He goes on to tell the most curious tale of the organized strike movement which introduced the disturbances subsequent to the Russo-Japanese War.

"On September 15 at noon, no one knows by whom or from what station, a signal of dots and dashes was tapped off. Each telegraph-operator answered the message and passed the word to the next, standing by until it was repeated back. Then, leaving all things in order, he stepped from the operating-room into the railway-station. With a motion he gave the countersign to the ticket-sellers, and each, as he received it, shut his desk, and walked out. The word went to the engineers, and each, at the signal, drew his fires and left the engine and its train forsaken on its tracks. Every postman put

away his mail, closed the safe, and left his office; every diligence-agent locked his doors. From Astrakan to Archangel, from Warsaw to Vladivostok, the electric summons went, and the whole realm of Russia was paralyzed.

"With two thousand roubles, offered by the Governor-General of Poland, before them, and ten bayonets on the tender behind, an engineer and a fireman were secured to run one coach, containing a terrified prince, from Warsaw to the frontier. In the south, a few cars were started by soldiers, but beyond such rare instances, for three weeks not a train was moved. More than this, not a telegram was transmitted, not a letter delivered. Everywhere was black silence, as if all the Russias had been swept from the face of the world.

"'More wages, and the constitution,' was the slogan of the strikers. The official cohorts met the issue courageously, with bribes and bayonets, and little by little got the upper hand. Force and money were used unstintingly to win the operators needed and break the front of the strike. A few, who, contrary to the expectations of their mates, had remained loyal to the officials, were finally secured and protected by the soldiery. As in time one train after another was manned and moved, the men who had stayed away lost heart, knowing but too well what would be the fate of those who were left outside the breastworks. First singly, then in crowds, they returned, and the great strike was broken."



"Here in Krasnoyarsk there was revolutionist rule for a while as well," the manager remarks. "The troops were driven out, and we had to wait for reinforcements. Yet when I came to my office there were sixty thousand roubles in the safe, not a kopeck of which had been touched. Some of the best employees were condemned. I was very sad, and the service was very poor when they marched away."

"What became of them?" we ask.

In a low voice he answers, "They went to the Yakutsk."

Everybody is silent for a moment.

"Where did you say?" inquires the missionary.

"The Yakutski Oblast," answered the chinovnik.

In Europe people talk of the rigors of Russia's winter. In Russia of the cold of Siberia. In Siberia, along the railway, when the thermometer gets down into the forties and the sentries pick up sparrows too numb to fly, they say, "It's as cold as the Yakutsk."

"One starts to the Yakutsk by the steamer-towed prison barge, following down the Yenesei from Krasnoyarsk," the engineer continues. "For the first thousand versts northward the way is through a mighty forest region. The interior is almost as unknown as when the Samoieds were its sole inhabitants. Marshes covered with trembling soil, to be crossed only on snowshoes, alternate with thickets, called *urmans*, of larches, cedars, firs, pines, and beeches."

"It is not alluring," we observe.

"The cold of the winter seems largely to arrest decay, and the fallen trees, remaining unrotted, form a nature-made *cheval de frise*, impossible to traverse save along the hunters' trails. Another thousand versts up the Upper Tunguska River, at whose limit of navigation is a crossing into the Lena System, and the Yakutsk Province begins; eastward to the coastal range overlooking Behring Sea, and northward to the Arctic Ocean, a million and a half square miles of desolation, extends this exiles' oblast. Prison-stations are located in the forsaken tundra country beyond the Arctic Circle, where scattered clumps of creeping birches and dwarf willows struggle to maintain existence in the few unfrozen upper inches of ground, congealed perpetually beneath to unmeasured depths. Here, where the average winter temperature is eighty below zero, come the exiles deemed most formidable."

"How long do men last in the Yakutski cold?" we ask the engineer.

"Oh, sometimes a strong man will outlive his sentence and return. The friends of our strikers ask me sometimes about one or another, but we have heard nothing of them since they marched away in chains. May fate keep us from that road!"

The theme is not enlivening, and soon we go forward into the observation-car.

After crossing the Kan River at Kansk, the railroad turns abruptly southwest, through the hilly

country of the Irkutsk Gubernia, and climbing into the highlands of the Altai, enters the watershed of the Angara. The drainage-basin of this river equals the combined areas of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. It is as well adapted to agriculture as parts of the best provinces of Central Russia in the same latitude.

The train pulls next into the station of Nishneudinsk. A booted peddler is making his way down the platform, with knives, combs, caps, and cheap knick-knacks. He stops to show us something special, a miniature of multicolored minerals, glittering from a hundred crystal facets. The Russian engineer picks out the flaky quartz, the iron pyrites, — “fools’ gold,” as they called it in old Nevada times, — green porphyry, iridescent peacock ore of copper, and some black crystals like antimony, which show here and there. Malachite, serpentine, topaz, and numberless other minerals are in the mass, which glitters in kaleidoscopic changes. A small piece of gold ore tops the pile.

“Cabinetski?” asks the engineer.

“Da, da,” assents the peddler. “Cabinetski.”

“It comes from one of the domains of his Imperial Majesty’s Cabinet,” explains the engineer. “Stretches of forest, belts of fertile river valley, fur districts, hundreds of thousands of square versts, the best mines in these Urals which produce sometimes yearly seven million roubles, the entire Nerchinsk region, producing six million roubles, are



'cabinetski,'" he remarks. "Even I, Ivan Vasilovich Poyarkov, am 'cabinetski'!"

He explains the origin of the term, going back to the old days when princedoms went to the courtiers of Catherine. Always for a great enterprise it was necessary to have a friend at Court. So the rich merchants and miners would form, with powerful members of the inner circle at St. Petersburg, alliances such as that made by the Stroganovs with Boris. Gradually, as time went on, the protected were swallowed by the protectors, until one by one the various estates had passed into the hands of the nobles of the Imperial Court. The mines in the Altai, which Demidov had opened up, were taken over in 1747 by the Emperor, those in the Zabaikalskaia Oblast at about the same time. With the passing of the years, what had been graft and expropriation was transmuted into vested interest, until now it is the established right of the Imperial Cabinet, or the Grand Dukes, to receive the revenues of these vast domains. In the mining regions their perquisite is from five to fifteen per cent. Save for the tax, however, miners are free to operate upon the ducal estates, and many are thus engaged.

A fur-capped station-agent clangs the big bronze bell, waits a moment, and then clangs twice. The passengers climb back into the box-like steel cars of the express. The third bell sounds, and the train starts. We sit down beside the engineer and the conversation takes up the "cabinetski" again.

"We have great traditions. One Governor, Nerschkin, of the 'cabinetski' mines at Nerchinsk, marched to fight the Czar. In 1775 he was appointed chief of the mineral belt in the Zabaikalskaia Oblast. He sat for eleven months at home with closed shutters. Then, on Easter Sunday, singing a devil's hymn, and with a fat female on either side, he drove to church and ordered the service amended to suit a rather bizarre taste. He organized a series of glittering shows at the Crown's cost, gave free drink to the populace, and throwing out many of his subordinates, appointed convicts in their stead. When he had used up all the tax-money in his keeping, he drew up cannon before the house of the rich merchant Sibirayakov, the operator of the mines, and made him hand out five thousand roubles. Finally he got together an army of Tunguses and the peasants, to march against the Czar. He was caught on the way and sent to Russia for punishment. It is the great honor of our service to be governor over the 'cabinetski' mines. Perhaps I shall rise there some day. Perhaps not. But I shall not march against the Czar."

The forests of birch and pine and fir, and the hills, as the car drives eastward, close in again. The crests of mid-Siberian mountains lift their snowy heads, and the train climbs up and up toward the great central Lake Baikal, and the city of Irkutsk, 3378 miles from Moscow, and further east than Mandalay.

When, on this seventh day, the train is winding up the Angara Valley toward Irkutsk, one may mentally look back over the country that has been traversed and estimate somewhat the meaning of the railway. The Urals formed the first landmark. As in the dominion of the blind the one-eyed man is king, so after the monotony of the plains, the Ural Mountains seem great and worthy of the name given by the old Muscovite geographer, the "Girdle of the World." By actual measurements, however, in their seventeen hundred miles of length, no peak rises over six thousand feet. Coming eastward from the Urals the line has cut through the southwestern corner of the old Tobolsk Government, has skirted the northern border of the steppe, has bisected the Tomsk Province, and after crossing the Yenesei River in Yeneseik has entered Irkutsk Province, and traversed the central highland region nearly to Lake Baikal.

Many who journey this way will have as their first impression, when the long winter ride draws to its close, a feeling of depression, almost of discouragement, so few are the settlements, so desolate seems all Nature. They see the single line of rails, without a branch or feeder in the mighty expanse from Chelliabinsk to Irkutsk, save for the stub put in for the ungenerous outlanders of unlucky Tomsk. They calculate that for a territory forty times the size of the British Isles, and one and a half times as large as all Europe, the inadequacy of a railroad less



in total mileage than the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, is manifest. Statistically-informed bankers sometimes shrug their shoulders at the mention of the Trans-Siberian. "Every year a deficit," they say. "Gross earnings but twenty-four million roubles, — one sixth of the Canadian Pacific Railway; one tenth of the Southern Railway. *Hoodoo* (bad)!" One hears expressed not infrequently in Russia the opinion that the railway is a sacrifice justified politically by Russia's need for a link to the Pacific, but ineffectual to secure prosperity and advancement to the isolated land of mid-Siberia. It is deemed, like the Pyramids, a monument to colossal effort and achievement but of little service to mankind.

Their statistics are correct. But it is to the greater honor of the road that much which it has accomplished will never appear in credits on the account-sheets. Where the white stations of the Siberian Railway stand now were once the wooden prison-pens with their guarded stockades. Murderers and priests, forgers, profligates, and university professors, highway robbers and privy councilors, all together have tramped this way. It is its past from which the railroad has raised Siberia, the past of neglect and exile that this steam civilizer has banished to the far Yakutsk.

Closer study gives, too, a better appreciation of the railroad's economic significance. The line holds a strategic position as truly as does the Panama

Canal. Though in Siberia proper there is the enormous area of nearly five million square miles, so much of this is in Arctic tundra, impassable swamp, forest, or barren steppe, that the really habitable and arable land narrows down to a tenth of this, which lies in general between the parallels of  $55^{\circ}$  and  $58^{\circ} 30'$  north, and is contained within a belt some thirty-five hundred miles long and two hundred to two hundred and fifty miles broad.

When it is noted that the tillable area of one hundred and ninety-two thousand square miles in Tobolsk and Tomsk, mostly along the Obi System, the stretch of twenty thousand miles in the steppe, and that of one hundred thousand in the Yeneseik and Irkutsk governments of eastern Siberia, are all in immediate proximity to the railroad, whose course is generally along the 55th parallel, the economic value of Russia's great enterprise takes a different perspective.

Its vantage is still more emphasized when the element of the north and south watercourses is considered. One after another the great Siberian rivers are crossed, — in the Tobolsk Gubernia, the Tobol, the Ishim, the Irtish; in the Tomsk Gubernia, the Obi and the Tom; in Yeneseik, the Yenesei; in Irkutsk, the Angara. Each of these reaches far up into the agricultural zone that lies north of the railroad, bringing the harvests to its cars by the cheap unfettered water-avenues. Thus, to the part of Siberia that is capable of extensive development, the

railroad is even now in a position to give great aid.

It is from such natural factors as these, not from financiers' figures, that one must weigh the potentiality of this great line. Its direct value is enormous, its indirect commercial services greater yet. It may best be compared to a mighty river system such as that of the Mississippi. The latter's traffic has never directly returned a dollar of the millions that have gone to maintaining its levees and training-walls and channels. Yet indirectly the return and the value, as an asset to the American people, are so great as to be incalculable. From its controlling position in relation to the cultivatable land and the interior watercourses of Central Siberia, as well as in relation to the far eastern artery, the Russian railway is an empire-builder as important as has been the Nile.

The results already achieved are noteworthy. The city of Omsk, where the railroad and the Irtysh River lines meet, has risen from a population of thirty-seven thousand in 1897 to seventy thousand in 1908. Further east, Stretensk has sprung from a town of two thousand people ten years ago to over twelve thousand to-day. Irkutsk has climbed from sixty to over eighty thousand since the railroad opened.

The rural population has increased even as that of the cities. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, all Siberia contained but two hundred and





ISLAND OF KALTIGEI



VILLAGE OF LISTVIANITCHNOE

LAKE BAIKAL



thirty thousand souls; at the end of the eighteenth, one million five hundred thousand; at the end of the nineteenth, five million. Now, with the railroad-induced immigration, it approaches the seven million mark. The Steppe Government alone has risen in fifty years from five hundred thousand to one million five hundred thousand, and the Tomsk from seven hundred thousand to two million five hundred thousand.

More in importance than its present utility is the fact that the railway holds the key to Siberia's future. The arable territory of the belt is equal to that of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas combined. This land is generally well-watered, in a climate suitable to grain-raising, and it is, as has been shown, in its whole extent, adjacent to river and rail transportation.

While such farming districts of the United States have some fifty inhabitants to the square mile, the most densely populated gobernia, Tomsk, has but six, and the Yeneseik but six tenths of one.

An immense further area will yield to clearing and to irrigation, as has been demonstrated in the great results secured from five hundred versts of canals in the Barbara Steppe. Coal and iron are available in many places, and timber in the greatest abundance grows in the northern district.

From a summary of these elements one may glean an idea of the Colossus sleeping beneath



these snows. At a normal rate of increase, fifty million souls should populate Siberia at the close of the twentieth century. The agency of their coming and existing will be primarily the line of rails across the continent. Despite the eight hundred million roubles expended, with only far-off hopes of profit, the faulty road-bed, the light rails, the steep grades, and crawling trains, the glory of Russia is still "The Great Siberian Railway."

### III

#### IN IRKUTSK

THE train pulls slowly up to the white station-house at Irkutsk. A swarm of porters, *nasilchiks*, white-aproned, with peaked hats, and big, numbered arm-tags, invade the carriage. They seize each piece of luggage and run with it somewhere into the crowd outside. You, encumbered with your heavy coat, laboriously follow. Irkutsk station, more than any previous one, is crowded with passengers and Cossack guards. Train officials are shouting instructions, and every few paces a sentry is standing his silent watch. This is the transfer entrepôt for all through traffic, as well as the depôt for the largest and most important city of Siberia.

Threading the press on the platform, you struggle with the outgoing human current, and in time reach the big waiting-room of the first class. It likewise is crowded with a mass of people, and its floor is cumbered with heaping mounds of baggage. One of these hillocks is constructed from your impedimenta, which are being guarded now by a porter, apparently the residuary legatee of the half-dozen original competitors within the car. The man takes

the long document that witnesses your claim to two trunks, and departs. Upon you in turn devolves sentry duty for the interminable time during which those trunks are being culled out from the baggage-car.

It is an exasperating wait, but the fundamental rule for Russian traveling is, "never separate from the baggage." The parcel-room here at Irkutsk held for six months a suit-case left by a friend to be sent to this traveler. The officials would not give it up to its owner or to any person save the forwarder, though he, oblivious to sequels, had gone on to San Francisco.

Like the rest, now, you camp, with the baggage in front of you, on the waiting-room floor. It is a very country fair, this station. At the far end is a big stand crowded with dishes, on which are cold meats, potato salad, heaps of fruit and cakes, sections of fish from which one may cut his own slices, boxes of chocolates, and cigarettes. All are piled up in heaping profusion. One can get a glass of vodka and eat of the *zakuska* dishes free, or while waiting he may buy a meal of surprisingly ample quantity and good quality at the long tables that run down the centre of the room. Most of the Russians order a glass of tea, and with it in hand sit down till such indefinite future time as the luggage situation shall unroll itself.

We move our baggage and join the tea caravan. Across the table is a slight, brown-faced man, with



an enormous black astrakan cape falling to his ankles, and wearing a jauntily perched astrakan cap on his head. "One of the Cossack settlers," a friend from the train remarks. Beyond are half a dozen tired-looking women, with dark-gray shawls over their heads. Near them are men with close-fitting *shubas*, or snugly-belted sheepskin coats, fur inside, and rough-tanned black leather outside. Beside the lunch-stand are a couple of young men with huge bearskin caps, short coats, and high leather boots tucked into fleece-lined overshoes.

A general at one of the little side tables is talking volubly to a plump dame with furs, which are attracting envy from many sides. The lady merely nods between puffs of her cigarette, and sips her tea. A large fat merchant waddles past, wrapped in a paletot made of the glistening silvery skin of the Baikal seal. The room is stifling, full of smoke, and crowded with people. Yet no one seems to feel the discomfort, even to the extent of taking off the heavy outer coats, which, with the thermometer at twenty degrees below zero, they have worn on the sleigh-ride in, from across the river.

Your friends of the train, save those whose possessions were comprised in their multitudinous valises, are all here, fur-coated likewise and sipping tea, waiting, without a thought of impatience, for the baggage to be brought out.

At last appears your *nasilchik*. "They are got," he cries, and balances about himself, one by one,

your half-dozen pieces of luggage. Through the noisy, gesticulating, thronging passengers and heaped belongings, he shoulders and squirms a way to the door and into the anteroom.

A couple of soldiers are good-naturedly hustling out, from the third-class waiting-room opposite, a little leather-jacketed and very dirty mujik.

"I did not owe seven kopecks. I cross myself. I am not a Jew," he loudly proclaims.

"*Nietchevo*," says the soldier. "Out with him just the same!" The peasants and crowd loafing alongside grin appreciatingly, as the mujik is escorted, collar-held, through the great doors.

The porter and yourself follow. A plunging line of sleighs, backed up against the outer platform of the station, extends far up and down the road. Their *isvoschiks*, leaning back, are shouting for fares. In sight are your two trunks. "How much to the Métropole?" you call. The legal fare across the river to the hotel is a rouble, but the Governor-General of eastern Siberia could n't tell how much it would be if you didn't bargain beforehand. "*Piat rubla!*" "*tree rubla!*" come hurtling from all sides.

It is for you to walk down the line calling in the vernacular, "fifty, seventy kopecks!" One of the drivers will eventually shout a fare which you feel able to allow, and the porter, who has been watching the bargaining process with keen interest, gives him the two trunks. The *isvoschik* retires then behind the

stormy hiring-line, and you renew the process for a second vehicle. The sleighs are just big enough for one person to occupy comfortably. Two can squeeze in if they be thin enough or economically minded. But a second sleigh is needed now for the hand-baggage, and a third for one's self. At length the arrangement is completed. The porter bows low at the donation of fifty kopecks, "for vodka"; then, "Go ahead! all ready!" you call, and with a flourish the procession of sleighs dashes out of the station purlieus.

The road to the town mounts first a low hill parallel to the river. As the horses climb toward its crest the panorama of the city and stream, hidden previously by the railroad structures, unrolls. Like a great band of white, the frozen Angara sweeps to the left and right. Beyond it stand out boldly the clustered domes of the cathedral, their surmounting crucifixes glittering in the sunlight. At your feet are the sections of the pontoon bridge, which in summer spans the river but in autumn is disconnected, the parts being moored to the shore, lest the drifting ice from partly frozen Baikal cut and destroy their woodwork.

A dark streak crosses the frozen river, with dots moving, as small apparently as running ants. The deceptive snow has made the distance seem much less than it is in reality. The streak is a road, and the seeming insects are the sleighs that pass and repass on the frozen river-trail. Between scattered



wooden houses our cavalcade rides down to the bank, and at length onto the smooth white sheet. It is like skating. The big horses on our sleigh are imported from Russia, and trot splendidly, overtaking one after another of the citizens with their little shaggy Siberian ponies. The heaped snow is on either side. The cold air is bracing, almost welcome, until it begins to eat its way in.

It is a fair drive, this, across the river — a full verst to the northern bank. We mount the incline that leads up the slope, and come to the first log houses of the poorer quarter of Irkutsk town. Gaunt dogs bark feebly, and slink away on either side. The street is almost deserted; the houses give no sign of life.

Suddenly we come into a square crowded with people, gay with life and motion, and motley in colors. It fairly buzzes with talk and cries and chaffering. Low-built booths face every side of the open *piazza*. We catch a glimpse of one stocked with hardware. Opposite it stands a little shrine within which are dimly visible pictured saints and the Madonna, before which are scores of burning tapers. Our *isvoschik* takes off his hat as he drives past, and reverently makes the sign of the cross. He crosses himself also as he passes the white church of St. Nicholas with its green roofs and gilded crosses, and he removes his cap to the long-haired and dark-robed pope that he meets, for the Siberian pays much reverence to his Church.



THE ANGARA RIVER



THE CATHEDRAL

IRKUTSK





The residences improve from the log cabins of the outskirts, and grow into the two-storied white-washed structures of the main thoroughfares. The streets also have an interesting procession of people. The big troika of some high official glides past, with coal-black horses and a coachman padded out into a liveried Santa Claus, after the style of St. Petersburg. Officers of the garrison sweep by in their light-gray overcoats. Shoals of sleighs and sledges are going to and fro. At almost every corner, armed with a sabre and revolver, stands a police officer.

As one drives along he reads the Russian letters on the placards and the names on the stores. Many here are Hebrew, for the Siberians of the cities are more tolerant than their European cousins. Irkutsk has a very large and prosperous Jewish merchant community, and sent her Dr. Mendelberg to the Duma. Irkutsk has had its representation cut down, they say, *post hoc*, — perhaps *propter hoc*.

The driver, who has kept his horses at a moderate trot from the station through the town, suddenly cries out to them, and swings and snaps his lash till they break into a gallop. "We always come in handsomely," says the city native who is with you, as the sleigh pulls up triumphantly at the door of the Hôtel Métropole.

A swarm of attendants greet you at the portal, a tall uniformed concierge, half a dozen aproned porters, a waiter or two, a page, and behind them the Hebraic Hazan, our host. Each porter seizes a

parcel and the concierge leaves his post by the front door to lead the procession up the broad red-carpeted stairway. With a rattle of keys he swings open the door to a salon big enough to give a ball in, and whose ceiling is six good feet above one's head. The average New York flat would rattle around in it. The concierge advances to its centre and bows. Then he goes on through to another room, almost its duplicate in size, with a forlorn-looking washstand and a screen across one corner.

"But the bedroom, where do we sleep?" you ask.

"*Sdiece, gaspadine*," he says, "right here"; and he conducts you to the screen.

Raised about eighteen inches above the floor is a little wooden platform-like structure, about the size of a cigar-shop showcase. A dingy mattress is rolled up at one end of it. As you ruefully feel its straw texture and survey the planks which it is to cover, the hotel-keeper pushes in to tell you that sheets will be put on at once if the *gaspadine* has not his own. "*Chass! Chass!* If only the rooms suit the *gaspadine*, everything will be arranged."

The porters silently deposit their loads and depart with their twenty kopecks each. The manager goes out, doubtless to gather his sheets. Only the concierge stays expectant after he has received his tribute. You throw your heavy overcoat over one of the armchairs and begin to open some of the bags. The concierge still stays and looks on. You begin to segregate laundry, and locate brushes and

tooth-powder. The concierge still stays and looks on. You get out some slippers which are an improvement upon the heavy snow-boots. The concierge still lingers.

"The room is accepted," you say finally.

"Yes, yes," he answers. "*Haracho*, but for the police, I want, please, your passport."

To show your passport, true enough, is no more of an incident than to take out your handkerchief. But to be obliged before you have been ten minutes in a place to produce a paper for the police telling of your age and infirmities, the color of your eyes, the number of your arms and legs and children, seems tiresome.

"Must all give in their passports?" you inquire.

"All, all," he answers. "I am punished if one person stays here overnight without showing it."

He takes the document, visibly impressed with its flying eagle and the big red seal, and bows his way out.

Now one can stroll around one's suite and take in some of the details. There are electric lights with clusters of globes in the big pendant electrolier of the parlor, and drop-lamps for the massive writing-desk in the corner! The armchair by the high-silled window is a good place to read in. Too bad one cannot look out on the shuttling sleighs of the street below, but the cold has thickly frosted the double windows. Here is a big sofa, plush-covered, and half a dozen armchairs surround the polished



table, whose top is scarred with a multitude of rings — from the hot tea-glasses, one deduces.

Mentioning tea, why not have some? There ought to be a bell somewhere. Unfortunately there is not a bell. In looking for it one finds that Siberian housekeeping does not include any dusting of the heavy red hangings which flank the doors and windows. An imperious cry resounds in the corridor. "*Chelaviek!*" It is followed by a patter of footsteps. So this then is the custom of the country. You open the door, and in the tone described in books upon elocution as "hortatory," cry out into the dim distances of the corridor, "*Samovar, chai!*" Somewhere down the line a voice answers, "*Chass, chass!*" and you retire to wait and hope.

Curiously battered the furniture looks when you inspect it closely. Here and there a flake is chipped away from the varnish, and cuts or dents show in the paint. Have sabre fights, perhaps, taken place here, or raids on assembling revolutionists? Certainly in the generations of occupants, life has been, in some fashion, tumultuous.

There is a fumbling at the door-knob, and, without any preliminary knocking, a waiter comes in with a nickel samovar, an empty teapot, and a glass. He puts them down on the battered table and walks out. The big kettle hums away pleasantly as the red charcoal in its hollow interior glows from the upward draft. The preparations seem all made, save for the tea. Perhaps the *chelaviek* has gone to get it.

You let your eye rove around to the little ikon far up in the corner, and the sleighing and wolf-shooting etchings on the walls. But after a time this becomes tiresome. Has the secret gendarmerie descended on the waiter among his teapots and trays? Has he forgotten the matter entirely, or what? The corridor-call seems to be the only recourse. Once again you go out. "*Chelaviek!*" and from some region he comes trotting up.

"Where is that tea?"

"Oh, *chai*," he says, illumined. "Has the *gaspadine* not his own?"

"Most decidedly the *gaspadine* has not his own," you retort. "The *gaspadine* does not carry pillowshams or bales with him. He is not a draper's establishment or a grocer's store."

"*Nietchevo*," says the waiter, amiably; and runs off, to return with a saucer of tea-leaves, and another containing half a dozen lumps of sugar.

"Your pardon, generally the *gaspadines* have their own"; and he leaves you to the brew and your meditations.

Well, it is pleasant, after a long train-ride, to stretch out in a big, if battered, armchair, and sip glasses of anything hot. The little teapot, full of a very strong decoction, is perched on the top of the samovar over its chimney. For a fresh glass you pour out a half-inch of the strong essence, throw in the sugar, and from the samovar's spigot fill the glass with hot water. It is thus just the strength

you personally prefer, and always hot. The samovar, by a judicious regulation of the draft, can be kept for hours exactly at the boil. It is a fine institution, but cannot be transplanted to a country where hot charcoal embers are not constantly available.

Comfortably ensconced and sipping one's tea, one can leisurely, Russian fashion, think of the most amusing method of passing the time. It is getting on toward evening; for the day fades early here. To-morrow is soon enough to look at things and distribute letters of introduction. The beverage has also blighted the appetite. Perhaps a light supper and an early couch would be wise. The latter in the far room looks singularly unpromising, but, "*Nietchevo!*" It is rather early for dinner or supper, but what of that? As an elusive New York politician used to say to each of the office-seekers who came to ask his influence for nominations, "If you want it, there is no reason why you should not have it." We will try another summons of the waiter.

Up he comes with the bill of fare printed in Russian and alleged French.

Perhaps some eggs would be good. You decide upon them to begin with, and you will have them poached.

"*Gaspadine,*" he says, "the eggs to-day cannot be poached. Will you not have an omelette instead?"

On second thoughts we will not have eggs at all this time; we will have a sterlet, a small steak, and



a compote. He goes off to the nether regions again. A long time passes, but at length he returns with the sterlet, its chisel-shaped nose piercing its tail in true Siberian style. White creamy butter and Franzoski kleb, white bread, round out the course. The steak is excellent and the canned fruit is satisfying, eaten beside the singing samovar in the great room of the main hotel of Irkutsk. Half a dozen letters pass the next hours until it is time to sleep. They are written on the big desk beneath the drop-light, with a glass of tea at one's elbow in warm cosy comfort.

The place is rather warm, and without any apparent source of heat, for there are no registers or gratings of obvious instrumentality. A search of elimination, like the game in which one is warm, warmer, very hot, leads at length to a rounded corner of porcelain built into the wall, of which only a curved segment shows in an angle of the room. Further inspection reveals that it is a big cylindrical stove fed by somebody in the hallway, and so arranged as to warm two adjoining rooms.

In mitigation of the fire-tender's zeal, we decide to open a window. Perhaps with an hydraulic jack this might be possible; but to manual labor it is not. A single pane of the inner window, however, swings back, and then we can open a similar pane in the outer window, leaving a hole as big as the port of a ship. It is sufficient in this weather. Some further corridor-shouting, produces, in due time, sheets and

blankets, and presently we lie down on the straw mattress in the little wooden-bottomed box called a bed. "*Spacoine notche*," the attendant calls, and without trace of irony.

It is one thing to go to bed, another to sleep. Tales are told of powder-circled couches which the invaders, surmounting these ramparts by climbing walls, dropped upon from above. There is a legend that there are some people whom they do not bite. "*Nietchevo!*" Is it not Irkutsk, the Paris of Siberia? Why then complain of parasites?

Furthermore, a brass band has started up somewhere in the immediate neighborhood the tune of *Viens poupoule!* to which there echoes a popular accompaniment of tapped glasses and stamping feet. Perhaps one had better get up and see things after all, — "Needs must when the Devil drives." We dress again. An exploring expedition reveals the big dining-room on the floor below full to the doors with uniformed officers, long-haired students, and assorted civilians. All are drinking and smoking. On a stage at one end of the room thirty short-skirted damsels are singing and dancing in chorus, to the great approval of the audience. As the curtain rolls down on an act, the *ci-devant* dancers descend to their friends on the floor. Corks pop, and sweet champagne flows. The call goes up for "*Papirose!*" and more cigarettes and more bottles come thick and fast.

Soon there is an air of subdued expectancy, and

eager looks are directed to the curtain. Somebody near by leans close and whispers for your enlightenment, "All-black man!" Out comes an old Southern Negro, who sings to the wondering Russians a Slavonic version of the "Suwanee River," between verses delivering himself, with many a flourish, of a clog-dance. Johnson is the man's name. How he drifted so far from Charleston he hardly knows himself. He followed the music-halls to 'Frisco, and somebody, for whom he "has a razor ready," told him he would make his fortune in Vladivostok. He kept getting further and further into the interior, picking up the language as he went, and turning his songs into the vernacular. Poor chap, the pathos he puts into the "Suwanee River"! He is thinking, in frozen Irkutsk, of the old Carolina homestead, and is singing and dancing his way back.

A girl in peasant dress takes the stage after "Sambo." She is singing some song that is running its course across northern Asia. The lassies at the tables and the men join in. Glasses clink and heels tap. The miners who have made their stake, the prospectors who hope to, the sable-merchants of the Yakutsk, the wool-dealers from Mongolia, all meet here as the first place where the rigors of the hinterland can be compensated. It is very gay — very, very gay.

In the years after the ukase of Paul I, ordering that all officers who had made themselves notorious for lack of education or training should be sent to



the Siberian garrisons, it may be imagined what a Gomorrah grew up under the Russian banners. Modern celebrations are by comparison mild and temperate, as the cold beyond these double windows is mild and temperate to that outside the Tunguses' huts, in the Yakutsk Province. But it is fairly impressive, nevertheless.

Even in a Siberian hotel, the world goes to bed sometime. By four o'clock the music has stopped, and the traveler is tired enough to sleep on even the populous plank-bottomed bed. Thus do all things work together to weave the "web of life."

It is nearing noon when one wakes to eat a combination of breakfast and lunch, and plan for the day. The Post-Office and the Bank are the first material objectives. One must register so that mail may be delivered. We go down and join two companions of the road. With careful directions from the porter, the party prepares for the half-mile walk to the Post-Office. The preliminaries are formidable in themselves. First the felt goloshes must be pulled over the shoes; then the big fur overcoat must be swung on and carefully buttoned down its length. Finally a fur cap, like a grenadier's, with ear-flaps is tied, and great fleece-lined gloves are donned. The droshky-drivers assembled before the hotel seem to take it as an insult to their profession that we elect to walk, and two or three follow along outside the curb until the group reaches the corner and turns into the main street, Bolshoiskaia.



A CHAPEL



BOLSHOISKAIA

IN IRKUTSK





There is an air of placid quiescence at this noon hour. The policeman at the nearest corner is ruminatingly handling his sabre-hilt, and watching the sleighs go by. Here and there a woman, with the ubiquitous gray shawl over her head, passes, with a preoccupied air. Sheepskin-clad mujiks are driving along, with sledge-loads of firewood or stiffly-frozen carcasses, on their way to the bazaar markets. The shop-windows attract our gaze. Here is one with the word "*Apteka*" over the door, which is to say, Apothecary. Benches are set in front of it, on which one may sit and watch the people pass, as in the chairs before a New England country tavern. Further along is a solidly built white department store, the Warsawski Magazine, wherein one can get all manner of apparel, — shawls of the latest Irkutsk pattern, towels and soap, and — most important — blankets for the trip into the interior. We stroll in for a moment. An individual looking like a stalwart Chinaman, with long braided queue, shoulders his way past us to buy some cloth.

"He is a Buriat of the tribe north of Irkutsk," explains one of the shop-girls, very close herself in type to those seen at Wanamaker's in Manhattan.

Near-by the imposing magazine is a low one-story booth occupied by a watchmaker. Beyond that is a walled enclosure with lofty gates, as befits a school. Still further is the yellow and green sign of a government liquor-*traktir*. The name is said to be derived from the French word *traiteur*, which was

current in the days when Napoleon and Bourrienne were planning conquests in their Parisian poverty.

As we turn up a side street, the shops for the poorer people appear. Gaudy pictures, of packages of tea, vegetables, and sugar-loaves, illuminate the walls, to tell the unlettered that groceries are sold within. Saws and hammers and vises are painted on the walls of the hardware-shops. Loaves of bread, crescent rolls, and rococo wedding-cakes decorate a bakery; boots and high-heeled slippers, a shoemaker's booth. The street is an open-air gallery of rude frescoes.

Presently we come to residences, some of cement-covered brick, with high enclosing whitewashed walls and iron gates, some wooden, with their rough-hewn logs unpainted save for the brilliant white sills and window-frames.

At length, far from the town's busy district, the Post-Office is reached. The building is thronged. Two soldiers are loading their saddle-bags with the mail for the regiment. Women are collecting money-orders. A crowd waits at the window of the girl who sells stamps. In rushing industry she makes the calculating beads of her abacus fly across the wires. Everybody is far too occupied to register a voyageur's name, — excepting always the half-dozen soldiers posted in different parts of the room and leaning stolidly upon their bayonets. We venture to ask one of them which is the registry window.

"*Russisch verstehe ich nicht*," is the answer.

A Siberian post-guard knowing no Russian and answering in German seems extraordinary.

"Where are you from?" we inquire in his native tongue.

"Courland," he answers, — "Courland by the Baltic."

This city of Irkutsk gave trouble in 1905. If it gives trouble again, the garrison will be safe.

The registering at length is done and we turn to go out. A tattered figure, bearded and haggard, with rags bound on his feet, opens the outer door.

"Will the *gaspadine* help a man get back to Russia?"

Your companion looks closely at him.

"A convict! very bad people." He adds: "There is a murder every day here, and one cannot safely go out at night. Very bad men!"

With the contradictory charity that is so typical of the Russian, he fumbles in his pocket and gives the unfortunate a fifty-kopeck piece.

We go now to the great market-place and the bazaars. Here where we enter is a row of hardware-shops. In the first booth a string of kettles hangs down, and knives, spoons, candlesticks, and hammers are suspended so as to catch the eye. The proprietor stands outside, chatting with a passer-by and the tenant of the adjoining booth. Further on are stationers, with tables of cheap-covered books. The wall of one is decked with chromos of galloping



Cossacks, led by a long-haired pope with a crucifix. The soldiers are sabring fleeing Japanese, and red blood is lavishly provided. On the opposite wall are glittering brass and silver ikons, and lithographs of ancient martyrdom.

Row upon row of red felt boots hang in the next line of booths, and in still another — the woodenware bazaar — are bowls and spoons, and platters of high and low degree. Further on a dozen women are grouped around one of their class, who is bargaining for a huge forequarter of beef, a full *pud* weight by the big lever scales that are balancing it.

“*Dorogo! dorogo!*” (Too dear, too dear!) she cries. “I will give eight kopecks a pound.”

The market-woman protests that she will be beggared at less than eleven kopecks.

A half-*sotnia* of little Buriat Cossacks come riding by, clad in their puffy leather *shubas*. Yellow-topped fur caps are their only uniform garment, and across their backs are hung the carbines. They make merry at the haggling women. Two swing off their shaggy ponies, and begin in turn to bargain in broken Russian for some paper-wrapped sweetmeats. They close the deal finally, tuck these away, toss themselves back into position, and ride off. Further along, half a dozen men cluster around a fur-cap seller. He is a merry fellow, and there is much noise and banter and gossiping. Such is the bazaar, the Forum of old Rome set down in a Siberian city.



THE BAZAAR, IRKUTSK





A short further stroll, and the party is at your other objective, the Bank. You take leave of the rest and enter. At the door, a grandly uniformed porter helps you off with the outer husk of furs, and motions you into the outer office, with its half-dozen clerks bending over sloping desks. One of these takes your card, and returning leads the way to a capacious sitting-room, with armchairs scattered here and there, pictures on the wall, magazines of many nations on the centre table. The American typewriter, which alone betrays that this is an office, is on a little table at one side. A tall military-looking man, gray-mustached and grave in manner, is seated beside the window reading some documents. He rises as you enter, and greets you, and for some minutes the conversation in French is upon general themes. Presently you go down into a side pocket and get out letters of introduction. One is from the Petersburg headquarters. He looks at the signature — Ignatieff.

“You are his friend?” The polished worldliness falls away as a cloak that is thrown off. “Splendid!” he says. “Welcome to our city. We must have tea.” He pushes a bell, and a page, red-bloused and wearing brightly polished jack-boots, appears. “*Chai, Alexis,*” he orders. “And how did you leave Ignatieff?” he begins eagerly. “Does he still drive his black stallions? It is two years that I have not seen him. When I was in Petersburg last winter, he was in Paris, and when I was in Paris, he was at Nice.

One is very separated from his friends here. One might as well be a convict."

You answer all his questions, and begin to feel as if you were at a little family party. Presently, in the midst of the double conversation, — for the Russians seem to talk and listen at the same time, — the boy comes in with a big samovar, and the other accompaniments. The banker makes the brew in the china pot. From this each of us serves himself as the compound conversation moves on.

"You have not yet seen the sights of Irkutsk?" he observes at last. "I will get my sleigh and show you around when we have finished."

"It is the middle of the day. I cannot break into your work like that," you protest.

But he rings a bell for the red-jacketed boy. "Order my sleigh. — We have the finest city in Siberia," he continues; "eighty thousand people now, and growing always. And trade has come with the railroad as we had not dreamed before. In the days when they used to bring the tea overland from Kiahta, the sledges from Baikal would carry as many as five thousand bales daily. We thought when this began to be shipped through by the railroad that it would hurt the city. But there was so much other traffic that the loss was hardly felt."

"The sleigh is ready," the boy announces.

"May I have the honor?" he says, with his easy grace.

He leads the way to the coat-rack, and is received

with the deepest bows by the uniformed worthy, who solicitously helps him on with his coat and overshoes. Then with a stereotyped motion the man holds out his hand for the tip. Though this servant is at the door of the banker's own office and presumably upon his pay-roll, the incessant tribute is his perquisite. It is usual throughout Siberia for wealthy Russians to scatter small silver everywhere along their path — to friends' servants, to house-porters, to beggars on the street. The most profuse miscellaneous generosity prevails. Riding to-day with the Russian banker is like watching the progress of a mediæval prince dispensing his largesse.

At the entrance to the bank is the sleigh, skeleton-framed and high-built, unlike most of the sleighs of Siberia. Three big black horses, with the snake-like Arab head that characterizes the best Orloff strains, are hitched to it, troika-fashion, the centre horse under a big bow yoke, the outside animals running free. The coachman has the square pillow-hat, and the enormous wadded corpulence of Jehu elegance.

It is an interesting ride in which we move slowly up the Bolshoiskaia, receiving, so far as the banker is concerned, neighborly greetings from most of the sleigh-riders, and respectful salutes from the foot-passers on the sidewalks. A nice social distinction our host draws in returning the formal salute for uniformed officials, the cordial wave of the hand for intimate friends, a nod for the humbler acquaintances: but none go unrecognized.



Something like the Roman's idea of showing his city by turns up and down the Corso, is this Siberian's. We do halt, however, and look at the big Opera House and the Geographical Society's Museum and the many-domed Cathedral, — buildings which in no city would be other than sources of satisfaction. After an hour of driving in the piercing cold, one's conscience begins to prick. The banker, even though absent from his affairs, does not appear to feel either business or atmosphere. At length we are brought at a gallop to the doorstep of the hotel.

"To-night we dine at eight. Adieu." With a bow he draws the bearskin robes about him, and the black horses bear him swiftly around the corner.

An acquaintance from the train is in the hallway as you climb stiffly up the steps.

"Has the drive been a bit cold?" he asks. "Come in and have a *stakan* of vodka."

"Is that not rather heady for a between-meal tippie?" you suggest.

"This is Siberia. When you run with the wolves, you must cry like a wolf, — but tea, too, is good."

You mount the stairs together, to the scene of last night's orgy, and order a couple of glasses of tea.

It is a strange anticlimax to find the room so deserted. At three this morning it was a good imitation of the traditional "Maxim's." At four in the afternoon it is simply a crude wooden hall, with the stiff-backed, plush-seated chairs ranged in bourgeois regularity at the discreetly covered tables.

Only the shuffle of somebody practicing a new step on the stage behind the curtains suggests the double life of this innocent-looking hotel dining-room.

A couple of glasses of tea attack the cold in strategic fashion, from the inside, and are better than the external reheating method. We sip in silence for a while.

"I am going to drive over to the Banno and have a Russian bath," observes your companion. "I do not like the tin tub they bring around here at the hotel. Are you impelled to come along?"

"Is there attendance and room for two? I'm not minded to sit around and wait."

"Room for five hundred," he says, with a long sweep of the hand. "Everybody goes there. It is one of the institutions of the city."

As you are now warm enough to consider a further drive, you go down to assist in bargaining for a sleigh to make the tour to and from the Banno.

A big brick building a verst or so away, with a number of private equipages and a stand for public sleighs and droshkys, is our destination. A beggar-woman opens the double doors and gets her service percentage from each passer.

"How much is given in this part of the world to beggars!" you remark.

The Russian smiles. "It is a part of religion to give. At every big family affair, — a wedding, a christening, a funeral, — we distribute money and gifts to the poor."

In the entresol of the bath-house, a big tiled anteroom, there are marble-topped tables, around which men and women are smoking and reading papers. One can dine here, even; but this comes after the bath. A ticket at the *kontora* gives, for a rouble, the privilege of a preliminary boiling and a flaying by one of the naked attendants. A start is made by washing you with infinite thoroughness, section by section, the attendant continuing on each spot until told to stop or advance to the next. An unfortunate foreigner, in Irkutsk, had his head shampooed seven times in succession before he could recall the cabalistic word necessary to direct the man's attention elsewhere.

One is scrubbed and rinsed, and is then conducted up onto a wooden platform, running along under the ceiling. Here, while the first inquisitioner dashes water on a steamer-oven below, the second scrapes the victim with new pine branches. One remembers an Irkutsk Russian bath at least as long as the smarting and the cold he gets from it endure.

Back at the hotel one can dig out his rather crumpled dress-suit in preparation for the evening's entertainment. Later, he gathers in another sleigh, and sets out for the home of the banker.

In Irkutsk nobody relies on house-numbers to find his way. Even Moscow has not yet advanced to this refinement of civilization. If the driver does not know the route, he stops to ask passers-by, "Where is So-and-So's house?" Again and again



you are taken to the abode of somebody else with a name more or less similar. Then the driver will say, quite nonchalantly, "*Nietchevo!*" — ask the next person he encounters for directions, and start anew. You leave abundant margin of time, and usually arrive sooner or later.

Our host of to-night is, happily, well known throughout the city. So the driver whips up to a gallop and rushes down the snowy streets. It is not a long ride to the big arched doorway of the white two-storied plaster-covered house, in front of which the driver pulls up with a flourish. You ring a bell at the side of the door and wait. The *isvoschik* has taken a station beside the curb, has folded his arms, and is nodding on the box, apparently prepared to camp there indefinitely. "Eleven o'clock, return," you say. "*Haracho!*" is his drowsy answer, given without moving. The horses have drooped their heads; they too are settled for repose. The tinkle of a piano comes from within, but minute after minute goes by, the bell unanswered, the *isvoschik* immovable on his little seat. Other pulls of the bell are at last of avail: the door slowly opens. A final objurgation to the coachman that he is not wanted until eleven o'clock falls on sealed ears. You go in through the massive doorway.

In the antechamber a gray-bloused attendant helps you off with wraps and goloshes, then silently disappears through a rear door, leaving you standing there unannounced. The vestibule is cumbered with

coats and hats on the wall-hooks, overshoes helter-skelter on the floor, and canes and umbrellas in the corner. It is like a clothing establishment. Beyond the curtained doorway on the right are lights, and the sound of the piano is louder. This seems the most promising direction for exploration, so — forward!

Beyond the portières is a splendidly lofty room, like that of an Italian palace, brilliantly lighted with electricity. Many-paned windows run high up, starting from the level of one's breast, and long heavy hangings half-conceal them. To the right of the door is a mahogany grand piano, at which, oblivious of the world, the host is diligently thumping away at *Partant pour la Syrie!* with inadvertent variations, singing carelessly as he plays. Beyond him, in an imposing armchair of German oak, like King Edward's throne in the Abbey, is a lady, propped with many cushions. She is slender and darkly clad, and is conversing with a young man in uniform, who sits very straight on a dainty gilt chair of the Louis XVI epoch. A low lacquered table before them is gayly painted with geisha girls and eaved pagodas. It holds a massive brass samovar encircled by a row of beautifully colored tea-tumblers of the sort that one sees on exhibition in the glass-factories which front the Grand Canal at Venice. The chorus comes from the banker at the piano: —

Amour à la plus belle;  
Honneur au plus vaillant.



THE ICE-BREAKER, VERMAK — LAKE BAIKAL





There is no use of paltering and waiting to be announced, so we enter the room. The performer hears the steps on the polished floor and swings round on the stool. "Ah, voilà!" he says, and rises to introduce you to his wife.

"A moi le plaisir," she says, smiling. "Mon frère, Ivan Semyonevich," presenting you next to the young officer, who rises abruptly and clicks his heels as he takes your hand.

You are motioned to a replica of the little chair, and your host returns to his piano, this time to play with immense satisfaction in your honor a hazy memory of some bygone variety show: "There'll be a hot time in the old town to-night."

"A friend is very welcome," says Madame Karetnikov, when he finishes. "We do not see many from the world here in Siberia."

"The life, however, is interesting, is it not?"

"O monsieur, I, too, was interested at first, but there are so few people of the world here, and we see them all the time. C'est affreux! I give you a month to change that opinion."

"You give a month, Irina; I give a week," growls her brother.

"If it were not that we get away during the spring one would perish of ennui," the hostess adds. "But Japan is not far. We go there or to Europe every year. Perhaps soon we shall get a transfer to another branch."

"You bankers have hopes," observes the brother,

"but what of us poor officials of the Justice Department! We are chained to the bench like old galley-slaves, and all we get is three hundred roubles a month and a red button when we are seventy."

As the macerated song floats anew from the piano, the hall-door opens and there is dimly visible in the anteroom a curious much-encumbered figure, with a gigantic sheepskin hat and short blue reefer coat. He divests himself of these, and of a long woolen inside muffler, and, brushing back his long hair, comes into the room. His blue tunic is resplendent with brass buttons and he wears jack-boots. A light down is growing upon his upper lip. He is nineteen or twenty.

"Good-day!" says our host, hailing him in English.

"Good-day, uncle!" he replies.

He presents himself before Madame Karetnikov, who holds out her hand, which he formally kisses.

"*Zdravstvovaitie*, Valerian!" says the official, shaking the young man's hand.

Then you are introduced with explanations.

"Valerian here is in his last year at the Irkutsk Realistic School, studying preparatory to engineering."

The status of science in Siberia becomes the theme, and the newcomer infuses considerable local color into his pictures.

"Does the professor in drawing suit you now, Valerian?" the banker inquires presently. Then he



adds to you: "They all went on strike because the old professor of drawing had a method they did not like. The authorities had to replace him before any of the students would go back."

"The new professor respects our rights," says Valerian soberly, not liking the levity of his elder.

Soon, from an adjoining room, come in the children of the host, — a very pretty girl of the age at which misses wear short dresses and braids; and a little boy of about eight. The boy very respectfully kisses his mother's hand and is introduced to the stranger, but finds a superior attraction in his father at the piano.

The girl, Marie Pavlovna, sits down beside her cousin Valerian. Lacking the stock football amenities of a happier land, and half-embarrassed, half-superior in the status of a budding young man, Valerian is not much of a conversation-maker. Marie Pavlovna, too, is seen but not heard. She is evidently the typical product of the French system of sex-segregation and cloistered study, which keeps girls abnormally uninteresting until marriage, perhaps to make amends subsequently.

"I think we had better go in and eat. It is half-past eight," says the host.

"Si tu veux," replies his wife; and we stroll out into a big dining-room, at one end of which is a heavily-freighted oak sideboard.

As we approach this, the host opens a far door, and shouts down into the darkness: —

"Obeid, Dimitri."

We turn to the *zakuska* sideboard. The official reaches for the vodka-bottle, and the little silver egg-like glasses.

"Vodka will it be, or do you prefer cognac?"

The various guests choose their tipples. With the gulp of a mountaineer taking his moonshine, the banker swallows the twenty-year-old French brandy, of the sort that gourmets protractingly sip with their coffee. The little boy slips out to his particular region of the house. The hostess takes her seat at the foot of the table, and the gentlemen pass and repass, bringing her assorted *zakuska* dishes as at a ball. Caviar from the Volga, Thon marine from Calais, sprats from Hamburg, Columbia River salmon, are spread out and attacked by the rest of us, standing, free-lunch fashion. One by one the men finish and straggle to their places at the table.

Three menservants, with gray blouses and baggy silk trousers falling over their topboots, appear now, one with a huge tureen of bouillon, another with the little silver bowls, and a third with a plate of the *piroushkies* that accompany the soup. Madame Karetnikov deals out the consommé for the whole table, and also for little Paul and his governess in some outside quarters. Every one begins to eat, without waiting for the hostess or for anybody else.

"It is hard work managing a big family like ours," she allows, in reply to your question about the domestic problem. "We always have seven or eight,

and one can never tell how many friends will come in to dine with us."

She casts a solicitous eye over the table, to see that no one has been neglected, and then serves herself.

"One must keep the men well fed," she observes. "Remember that, Marie, when you get married."

Marie at the far end of the table nods assent.

"But you must not think of marrying until you are told," adds the banker.

She nods assent to this, too.

"Don't mind him, Marie," says the official. "He thinks he is living in the time of the Seven Boyars. Take my advice. Pick out the man you want and go for him. You can't fail."

"Such ideas to put in a girl's head!" says his sister, smiling.

The soup-course is nearly over, when suddenly the banker ejaculates, and jumps up to welcome some new arrivals.

"Ah, father!"

He runs to a sturdy benignant-looking old man, and kisses him on both his white-bearded cheeks, then does the same to the little old mother.

"Come in, come in; we are just beginning."

At once the table is in a state of unstable equilibrium. The old lady is steered to a chair at the head, and the rest are pushed along to make room. The father makes his way, under similar escort, in the direction of the vodka-bottle.



"No French brandy for me!" he says, and puts the fiery Russian liquid where it will do the most good. He, too, goes to the far end of the table.

The student tells in a low voice that the newcomer is a veteran of Sevastopol, was once the personal friend of Czar Alexander, the Liberator, and was decorated by him for gallantry at Plevna.

"What a splendid old Russian he is!" one thinks, noting all the kindliness and courtesy of his honored age, and the grip of a bear-trap in his hand. Yet there is an indescribable air of melancholy about him, as if a great sadness were being bravely and uncomplainingly faced. A remark from the hostess turns you to her.

"Father is one of the Colonization Commission. We are all very much interested in hearing about his discussions with the settlers!"

"Colonization for the settlers or for the exiles here?" you ask.

"It is the government assistance for the voluntary emigrants, not for the unfortunate ones."

"But the latter must be a problem in themselves?"

Madame seems embarrassed.

The student leans over and in a low tone whispers: "His youngest son, the brother of Vladimir, is in hiding, is under sentence of death. They don't speak of him here."

"He has just come from the Governor," adds Madame Karetnikov, "who is a great friend of his."

The Governor has heard from Petersburg that they may bestow the cross of St. Stanislaus."

"That is the autocracy here, which you do not know in your country," adds the student, in a low voice. "He is an intimate friend of the Governor and two of his sons are officials, yet his last son is beyond pardon. The old man himself knows not where he is. Yet they decorate the father. He still believes in the Emperor."

"Do not let my nephew talk politics to you," says the hostess, rather anxiously.

Valerian is silent.

A supplementary tureen of soup makes its appearance, and the two newcomers are served with it. The rest of the party have advanced to boiled sturgeon, with a thin sauce, compensated by Russian Château Yquem from the Imperial domain in the Crimea. Roast beef follows the fish, with the old general and his wife at length even with the rest.

Then come duck and claret, and finally dessert and champagne. The toast of the evening is drunk to the old general, who brightens as the meal advances. In the big reception-room, Turkish coffee is brought, which is poured from the brazen ladle and served in exquisite little cups without handles.

"We got them in Damascus on one of our trips," says the host.

Conversation goes round the table. The official is in eager talk with Madame Karetnikov about a com-

mon friend in a smart Petersburg regiment, who has got badly in debt.

"He ought to apply for a transfer to the Siberian service. The officers get more pay, and it costs less to live," she is urging.

"But for Serge we must consider how much greater is the cost of champagne here," retorts the official.

"We can marry him to Katinka, and make her father get him a promotion," the sister suggests. "I think he ought to have left the army and gone into the contracting, — every contractor I know is as rich as sin and goes to Monte Carlo."

So the conversation rambles on. Cigarettes are passed. The hostess will not have one.

"I used to smoke, but it is so common now," she explains. "Every peasant's wife hangs over her oven with a cigarette in her mouth. Even a vice cannot survive after it has become unfashionable."

The host comes up to show you his curios.

"This Alpine scene is one of Segantini's. We got it in Dresden before he had earned his repute. I am very proud of my wife's discrimination. The statuettes are from a little sculptor in the Via Sistina in Rome. Rien d'extraordinaire. The vase came from the Imperial Palace in Peking. I bought it from a Cossack for fifty kopecks. I have been told it belongs to the Tsin Dynasty, and is better than those they have in Petersburg Hermitage."



So you are shown the spoil of two continents in connoisseur purchases.

"Hardly to be suspected in Irkutsk," he allows, complacently.

Every year host and hostess visit the Riviera, taking a turn at Monte Carlo and Nice and Cannes. The banker speaks English, French, German, and Italian fluently, and half a dozen other languages passably. His wife acknowledges only French and Italian.

The conversation turns to the idealism of Pierre Loti's description of the road to Ispahan. The banker has followed this road himself, and he has a much less poetic memory of it. The veteran — his father — is not up in French or English, but he has a good knowledge of German left from academy times. In this language he tells of the old days of the serfs and of the Crimea. He talks with the kind frankness of age that does not need self-suppression to prompt respect. When the guests rise to leave, and the buoyancy of the entertainment is passed, his cloud comes back. His voice has just a touch of bitterness as he says good-bye.

"I am glad we can welcome to our country a man traveling for pleasure. So many who come are here under less pleasant auspices."

"*De svidania*," you say at last to everybody, and out you go into the midnight frost. The droshky-driver is still there waiting. He has slept since you entered, unmoving through the hours. "*Gas-*

*tinitza*," you direct; and he drives to the hotel through the bleak starlit night.

Valerian comes a few days later to visit us, and volunteers to be our guide for Irkutsk.

"If I miss a few days at the Academy, what matter? I shall improve my English," he explains.

Valerian is typical of the student class, all ideal and aspiration. He has gathered the heat of the epoch, and has concentrated it upon his philosophy. He is saturated with the French Revolution. Does he mention Danton, for example, it is with intentness of loyalty for the great Mountain speaker, which makes one almost think that the year is 1792, and that the place is sans-culottic France; "debout contre les tyrans!" He sings fiercely with his comrades, to the tune of the *Marseillaise*, the Russian revolutionary anthem, ending it with a swirl. "For the palace is foe to our homes!" America he considers one of the free nations, but he has reserves. Though he is not at one with our political system, yet he thinks that all learned about it is a great gain.

"Your land is free politically," he specifies, "but it is not yet emancipated from capital, — it is not free socially. You have an industrial feudalism and a proletariat. So will it not be when we have won our revolution."

Many are his anecdotes of the uprising of 1905, whose tragic drama will never be fully pictured and whose history is to be gleaned only from the mouths of cautious witnesses.



THE ORGANIZERS OF THE CHITA REPUBLIC





"We rose at Irkutsk, many of us, students and workmen, but General Müller had a strong garrison of troops here. We tried them, but they would not come over. They shot down our men and dispersed all the meetings, and now he is Governor in the Baltic Provinces. They say that when he was drunk, he would shoot accused men in his own railway carriage; "the butcher!" we of the Cause call him. At Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk the city was held for weeks by our party. The railway men would not run troop-trains and the Government was paralyzed. Chita was held by a Revolutionary Committee of Safety. We manned the entrances with artillery. We took turns watching, and ran the whole city, not touching the money in the Treasury. But we were few, and word came that the insurrection was everywhere broken. Müller was marching from Irkutsk, and Rennenkamp came back with the troops from Manchuria. He promised moderate terms to all but the leaders. The townspeople were afraid, and rose against our men. Many were taken. Many fled away and got to Japan and America. Some were shot and some were sent to the Yakutsk. So it was crushed, and our great chance was gone."

"Will it come again?"

"*Ni snaia!* The workmen are ready. The intellectuals are ready. The peasants back in Russia cry for land. Perhaps they too will be ripe next time, and the soldiers will be with us. In any case Siberia has seen the red flag float over the Chita Republic."

Many-faceted is the life in a Siberian city. In numerous ways it seems feverish and abnormal, for it represents the young blood of a capable race struggling upward, and knowing that in much its battle is desperate. The towns have hardly yet got settled methods; they are outgrown villages where men of all stamps, who have become enriched in the new land, come for the pleasures or the benefit of a less monotonous existence. The traditions of peasant origins survive in the conditions and general civic neglect.

Irkutsk, once its novelties have become familiar, has lost its charm. That it is provincial is no discredit, but its amusements are of the grosser order, unredeemed by wit. Every evening the tawdry dining-room at the hotel echoes the songs and noise of the revelers. The same circle attends the theatres. The students discuss hotly the rights of man and the Valhalla prepared for all martyrs, and calm simple wholesome life seems to be reserved for the workaday world which moves on its slow toilsome upward way in silence.

There is, however, to-night an unwonted stir at the Hôtel Métropole. The corridors are thronged. A Russian friend points out the notables. The blue-uniformed official yonder with the gray mustache and the row of glittering orders on his breast is the Governor-General. Half a dozen members of the local bar, in frock-coats, pass through. In the dining-room a young lieutenant, dashingy clad in long



maroon coat with the row of silver-topped cartouches and the clattering sabre of the Emperor's Cossack Guard, is being deferentially entertained by officers of the garrison. Three officials are taking champagne with two beautifully gowned women, Parisiennes even to their long pendant earrings. The hotel-pages in fresh red blouses and high boots pass here and there with messages. The waiters, with intensified deference, glide among the crowd in its many-colored uniforms and glittering war-medals.

"Who has arrived?" we ask, surveying the scene.

"A member of the Imperial Cabinet."

The announcement of his name has a personal interest and memories of earlier stays in Russia.

The Minister's life has been a romance indeed. Disagreeing with his family through liberal ideas, he went in 1862 to Birkenhead as a locomotive engineer, to the United States, to Argentine, and returning to Russia worked up from a very small government position to be chief of all the Russian roads, railways, and telegraphs, and Minister of Ways and Communications in the Czar's Cabinet. His brain threw the line of rails over half a continent. On the outbreak of the Japanese War he was called from his retirement to the colossal task of bringing to the front across the width of Asia half a million men, their artillery and arms, their food, their transport, all on the one line of rails. He has served under three Emperors and is life-member of the Senate.

You send a card in through one of the attachés.

In a few minutes there is delivered to you the Prince's card, across which is written: "At noon."

At the hour appointed you mount to the apartment overlooking the Bolshoiskaia. Guards at salute, staff in brilliant uniforms, secretaries and callers in full dress, — the antechambers are full. You pass through to the furthestmost room.

In a nest of books and maps, with blue-prints outspread on floor and chairs and sofas, is an elderly man in a plain frock-coat, without a ribbon or a button to hint his honors. He is vigorous, hearty, simple, almost unchanged from your earlier acquaintance, his keen flashing eyes hinting ever a reverse side to the great repose of his manner.

Personal questions occupy the first minutes, but presently we are into larger themes, and you begin to feel subtly the man's power. He has come on a special tour, to inspect, with his own practiced eyes, the projected double-tracking of the Siberian Railroad. Every brakeman and locomotive engineer, every traffic superintendent and division manager along the route knows he could step down from his private car and handle the levers and give them directions. His mind is a very vortex of ideas, and his range of conversation reflects world-wide interests. The talk gets to the American political situation and the race-problem. Later it shifts to the Japanese War, and he tells of some of his experiences getting the troops into Manchuria. A mention of the overland road to China awakens reminiscences.



"It was long before the railroad that I went over that route first," he says. He tells of his months-long horseback ride beyond Baikal before the railroad went through, inspecting the trade-route and the prospects of the country. By and by the conversation has got to the special problems of the Slav. With the straightforward frankness of a great nature which wishes the best for his country, he tells of the Russian aspirations from the standpoint of those who are facing the problems of the nation in their fact and practice.

"I too," he says, "was once for changing much in a little time, and worked to free the serfs and to start the elective Semstvos throughout the Empire. Alas! so much that they want is possible to no government! One cannot by enactment abolish want or bring all men to a *niveau*. We are trying to give every man the chance to rise, unchecked by any administrative barrier. But one sees as he lives longer that all which one wishes cannot come at a *coup*. Great changes, great improvements, I have witnessed, but they have not come by violence. We must keep order, and hand on to our sons an undivided Empire of the Russias."

You leave this patient builder of the new order alone amid his maps and studies in the idle Sunday city. As you descend the steps, a black-capped student passes the door. He is humming the forbidden *Marseillaise*.



## IV

### SLEDGING THROUGH TRANSBAIKALIA

THE sledge-route that leads to the Chinese frontier goes southward from Verhneudinsk across the territory of Transbaikalia. In old days one reached its starting-point by traversing the frozen Lake Baikal in sleighs, muffled in furs against the sweep of the terrible winds, with plunging ponies at full gallop.

Now, after mighty effort and at monumental cost, the line of the great railroad has been driven through the last obstacles that blocked an open way, and trains carry the traveler through the deep cuts and tunnels that pierce the barrier crags around the Holy Sea.

It is not the express that one takes at the Irkutsk station to reach the ancient fort, but the daily post-train, the servant of local traffic. Luggage-cumbered passengers crowd into the cars wherever there is a place. A few, and these mostly officials, establish themselves in the blue-painted first class. Many press into the yellow second class — merchants, lesser chinovniks, tradesmen, popes, and children on their way to the city schools. Swarms pour into the green wooden-benched third, where the thronging tousle-headed emigrants patiently huddle closer

to give room to newcomers. Next to the engine, with its big smokestack, is the mail-wagon, on whose sides are painted crossed post-horns and the picture of a sealed letter. Behind this, with a sentry on guard, is the baggage-car. The sinister compartment of drawn shutters and barred windows is for the prisoners. In this princes or artel-workers, their identity unsuspected, can be run across a continent to their unknown places of exile.

The post-train starts from Irkutsk occasionally on time. In general, along the local line the time-table is about as reliable a guide as the calendars sold to the mujiks, with weather prophecies for each day of the year. Fifteen miles an hour is mean speed. Stops may be for minutes or for hours. One settles down therefore in the attitude sacred to a yachting cruise, — foie gras and bridge, if it is calm; double reefs and pilot-bread if it blows up. The high heavens alone know when we are to get in, and nobody cares. It is not unpleasant withal to sprawl over a great broad couch, and as the train crawls forward watch the white highlands slowly unroll, the towering cliffs and peaks with spear-like pines driving up through the snow, and the icy lake below.

For meals, one dashes out during the station-stops, and before the third bell gives warning of the start, devours meat-filled *piroushkies* and swallows lemon-tinctured tea at the long buffet-tables decked with hollow squares of wine-bottles, and beer from

the seven breweries of Irkutsk. If one has a teapot he can get boiling water from the government-furnished samovar, and milk from the peasant-women who stand in booths hard-by. He can add salt fish and hot fowl, together with rye-bread and butter, and then consume his rations at leisure in the compartment. At night the seats are let down, and one sleeps in fitful naps among the hills of baggage. When morning comes, an hour-long procession forms to take turns at the wash-bowl with its trickle-valve, in a towelless, soapless, and cindered lavatory.

We leave Irkutsk at ten in the morning, and reach Verhneudinsk at seven next day, covering in twenty-one hours the 446 versts. Here is the last of the railroad. With troika, sledge, and tarantass, by highway and byway, over frozen rivers and camel-tracked trails, we must now follow the old road into the heart of Asia.

The post-station that serves as point of departure for the sledge journey lies some distance away, at the edge of the town. An *isvoschik*, after due bargaining, proceeds to transfer thither us and our dunnage-bags.

As we ride through the town, just waking for the day, the streets, the lamps, the telegraph-wires, the comfortable houses, — each and every symbol of civilization takes on a new significance now that it is to be left behind. On the parade-grounds the recruits are at the morning drill, shouting lustily in unison,





BAIKAL STATION



THE HIGHLANDS OF TRANSBAIKALIA



"*Ras, dva, tre!*" to keep the step. We pass the barracks, the shops with their brightly illustrated signs, and ride under the wooden yellow-painted Alexander Arch.

Soon we reach a street of low log houses, and a lofty boarded enclosure is ahead. At its gateway is swinging a black signboard, painted with post-horn and the Czar's double-headed eagle. "*Postava Stancie*," is inscribed over the lintel. Between the black and white-striped gate-posts we swing into the courtyard. To the left stretches a low log house. To the right, along the wall, are ranked sledges. In front are the stalls. Grooms, whip in hand, stand around in the courtyard, muffled against the cold.

"Is the *gaspadine* going on?" one of them asks.

On the reply, "Yes, at once," he scurries off to start harnessing, and you shoulder open the low felted door of the post-house and enter the big waiting-room.

"Three horses?" asks the young black-mustached agent within.

"Yes, a troika sledge."

He turns to the book of registry attached to the rough table by a long cord fastened with a big red seal, and begins to write.

"The name?" he asks. It goes down.

"The destination?"

"The Chinese frontier at Kiahta."

"Your first relay-station is Nijniouboukounskaia, twenty-seven versts."



The fare is set out in a printed placard posted up on the wall; as is the price of a samovar, fifteen kopecks, and all the other items that the traveler may require.

The agent hands you the slip: "One rouble, eighty-two kopecks, for two persons, the *gaspadine* and his courier"; something under three cents a passenger-mile.

As you wait for the harnessing of the post-sledge, the courier overlooks anew the bags and counts out again the parcels. As light as possible must be the impedimenta. Now is the last chance for change.

The big station-clock ticks on. The agent moves about in the warm dusky silence of the house. The courier straps tighter the dunnage-bag.

"Look that your furs are snugly fastened," he says.

There is trample of footsteps by the door. A fur-clad, ruddy-faced driver stumbles in, makes the sign of the cross before the ikon on the further wall, and beckons to you.

"Ready!" he says.

Three shaggy ponies stand hitched to a wooden sledge, not high like those of city *isvoschiks*, but low and shaped like a wide bath-tub. The bottom is cushioned with hay and you are to sit some six inches above the runners. The bells hanging from the big arched *duga* over the centre horse jingle as he frets. The side horses, that will run loose be-

tween rope-traces, look around at the *yamshik* who stands by. He holds in his mittened hands four reins of leather, twisted into ropes — two for the centre trotter, one each, on the outside, for the gallopers.

You climb into the nest of rugs and furs superimposed upon your baggage! The *yamshik* leaps to the precarious perch that serves as his seat. The whip falls, and with a bound the horses are off. Always one starts at top speed, however bad the way. Always one finishes at a gallop, however jaded the horses. It is the rule of the Russian road.

With bells jingling, the driver shouting to clear the way, and a white cloud rising behind, the sledge skims out between the log houses which flank the straggling street. Dogs bark and the idle passers-by stare. Fur-covered pigs scramble up with a squeal, and scurry from their resting-places in the road. Girls, with shako-capped heads, peer through the windows. Little chubby boys, in big brown felt boots, cheer.

Soon the uttermost houses of the town are left, and emerging we plunge into the country road through open fields, dazzlingly, blindingly white. The trotter's legs seem to move too fast, as if seen in a cinematograph. The gallopers, free of all weight and held only by the two traces which fasten them, outrigger fashion, swing on like wild ponies of the steppe. Crude and massive as the sleigh may look, its burden is almost nothing on the hard compacted

snow. The horses in the rush through the bracing air seem to be the incarnation of the wind. A rut in the glistening road does not produce a disjuncting shock, for, as a huntsman's bullet glances from the skull of a wild boar, so the sleigh glides into the air and swiftly down again at a long low angle. It is a fact of "flying."

The cold is intense. After an hour of riding you have learned a certain lesson which adds to your experience. Whether the traveler shall make this winter journey equipped with full camp-kit, portable stove, folding-forks, thermos bottles, and shell-reloading tools, or Tatar fashion, with a rifle and a haunch of mutton, is important but not vital. Let him make sure, however, that the huge all-enveloping sheepskin overcoat is at hand to supplement the coats beneath, and that a shaggy sleeping-rug is provided in addition to the blankets. One obstinate newcomer started with the insistence that a mink-lined Amerikanski overcoat, with two heavy rugs as lap-robies, would be ample. After an hour on the road, he turned into a peasant's hut to thaw out upon boiling tea, while the driver went back to the town to buy the hairiest robe and coat obtainable. These were thenceforth worn on top of the initial outfit. Siberia for a midwinter sledging journey exacts this tribute of respect.

For versts the winter road follows down along the river between towering pinnacled rocks, where in summer eagles nest. The cliffs are vividly spotted



with orange and green lichens; below they are fretted with the scourings of ice brought down in the spring freshets. All along beside the road are the familiar pine-saplings planted in mounds by the villagers to guide the way. In the vast monotony and drifting snows travelers would be lost but for these landmarks. Along the fertile river valleys hamlets are thick. A cluster of houses is met every six to ten versts. Presently the road leaves the river and bends to the left, cutting across fields. When it quits the bank, it climbs sharply a five-foot ascent. The driver does not even slacken speed. At the turn he swings the sure-footed ponies suddenly, and takes the slope, letting the outrigger bring up against a stiff clump of bushes. There is a crash, the sleigh has caromed off at right angles, nothing has befallen, and we are on again.

Verst after verst of plateau goes by, with rounded rolling hills of dimpled snow, treeless, houseless, a barren waste. Then comes a crest so steep that the horses can only toil up it at a walk, and the passengers must climb beside them. The forest closes in as the height is mounted, — white leafless birches and dark green pines. The light snow is seamed with rabbit-runs, and here and there are the far-spaced tracks of deer or wild goats.

A mound of stones and a small pole with a Buddhist prayer-flag — for here is the ancient home of the Buriats — mark the top of the ascent. There is a moment's halt while you climb in and the driver

tightens the saddle of the centre horse; then down the giddy descent we sweep, in full gallop once more. The pines flash past, and you hold your breath in fear of the smash that must come should a horse fall, should a trace break, should a side rut swing the sledge over. One is, however, so close to the ground that an overturn is usually harmless, save to the clothes and the nervous system, both of which are at a discount in Siberian sledging. Then too the outrigger arrangement is such that the craft turns a quarter of the way over and slides on the supplementary runner until it rights.

The cold is intense. One wipes away the snow from his fur collar, and the dampness on the handkerchief has caused it to become frozen stiff. It is a crackling parchment that goes back into the pocket. Eyeglasses are unwearable, for the rising vapor from one's breath is caught and frozen on them in an opaque film. Fingers exposed but a moment become numb and useless, and uncovering the hand is an agony. Gradually as you ride, through the great felt boots, the triple flannels, the camel's-hair stockings, the fur-lined gloves, the coats and rugs, the cold begins to bite. You have become fatigued and depressed of a sudden. The driver points to your cheek, where the marble whiteness is eating into the flesh, and bids you rub it with snow. An involuntary shudder grips and shakes you relentlessly from head to foot.

It is time to stop. If you try to go on beyond the

next station you will, if the gods are lenient and you do not freeze, get out nerveless and trembling, not for hours to rally strength and energy. The chill will cling, however hot the post-house oven. Even now you are weak, beaten down, querulous, in a sudden feeble old age. The shudder means that the human animal is near his endurance limit.

On an urgent call, with special preparations, you may travel for a hundred hours, night and day, without halt save for change of relays. Physically, it is possible to fight cold for a time. You can run along in all your furs beside the horses, you can beat your arms together, and rub nose and cheeks to keep the blood in motion. You can drink copious glasses of scalding tea in the post-houses, and live by stimulants on the road. Through ceaseless vigilance and resolution you can keep from freezing, even while intense fatigue creeps on and vitality is going. But the persistent awful shudder is Nature's red lantern. Run past it if you must, — it is at your peril.

Dark against the snows, now a low-lying village comes into sight, — Nijniouboukounskaia, — and among its first log houses is one bearing the post-horn signboard. A cry rouses the jaded horses to a gallop, and covered with snow, the sledge sweeps into the yard. Steaming and frosted white, the animals stand with lowered heads. Stablemen run to unharness them. Stiff with cold and muffled like a mummy, you clamber out, and on unsteady legs mount the steps to the felted door of the posting-inn.



In the big bare room, beside the warm oven, robes and overcoats can be thrown off. A red-capped girl loads the samovar with glowing brands from the fire, and sets it humming for tea. Brown bread is produced and eggs, and a great bowl of warm milk. With these, and the contents of your bag of provisions, can be eked out a welcome *obeid*.

For the night's rest one need not seek a bed. There is never a spring to ease the bones from Verhneudinsk to Kiahta. There was discovered just once on the journey — at Arbouzarskie — an iron skeleton, bearing to a spring bed about the relation that the three-toed Pleistocene prairie trotter holds to a modern horse. The post-keeper had carefully hewn with his axe five pine planks to cover the gaunt limbs of it. The voyageur slept on the soft side of these timbers. Bed and board are synonyms in Siberia.

For a couch there is to-night the narrow wooden law-provided bench, or — a less precarious perch, and equally resilient — the sanded floor. For bedding, one has one's own blankets and coats. What if the shoulder slept on numbs with one's weight, or the corner of the soap-box in the traveling-bag, serving as a pillow, dents the tired head! One draws off felt boots and some of the outer layers of clothes, rolls the sheepskin about one, covers the head with a blanket, and sleeps like the forest bears in their winter dens.

Just before daybreak is the best time to start, so

that one can cover the most road possible while the sun is up. At ten or eleven, an hour's stop for lunch is advisable, and then on again until sundown. It is better not to travel after nightfall, as the cold is so much more intense. We dedicate the evening to hot tea, and then turn to the blankets and the bench.

The stretch between Verhneudinsk and Troitzkosavsk, officially rated at two hundred and eighteen versts, is really somewhat longer. A run of average record took from 4:20 P. M. Tuesday to 11:30 A. M. Thursday — forty-three hours and ten minutes. This included all relaying, seven hours a night for sleeping, dinner and breakfast halts, two accidents (an overturning and a broken runner), and one calamity — a Siberian who snored. The actual driving-time, over a road for the most part hilly, was twenty-two hours, five minutes, or just about ten versts per hour.

Horses stand always ready, with special men at hand to harness. Drivers swing on their shaggy greatcoats, and with almost no loss of time one is out of the shadowed courtyard and on the road again in the dazzling whiteness of the winter day.

In traveling "post," however, with relayed sleighs and big empty guest-rooms, one does not become acquainted with the life along the way. One has only hurried glimpses of slant-eyed Buriat tribesmen, of galloping Cossacks, trudging peasants, post-agents, girls who carry in samovars and

silently steal out, rosy-cheeked boys on the streets, and women at the house-windows. To know the people and see their daily life one must get away from the beaten highroad, strike out from the government-regulated inns, and blaze one's own path into the interior.

First, you get a low passenger-sledge, long enough to admit of stretching out, and without too many projecting nails on the inside; then, three good ponies of the hardy Cossack breed, that are never curried or taken into a stable through the bitterest winter. The best animals procurable are none too good for climbing the passes away from the river-courses. The whole outfit can be bought for three hundred roubles in any of the interior towns.

For drivers, there is a class of *yamshik* teamsters, who spend their lives guiding the sledge-caravans which carry the local traffic. One of these men, Ivan Kurbski, can guide you through a whole province, and lodge you every evening with some hospitable friend or recommended host. Whether he has himself been over all the changing by-paths in the wilderness of the Zabaikalskaia Oblast, or whether he mentally photographs the directions of his friends regarding each village, is an unsolved mystery.

When the day's journey is done, Ivan will drive slowly down the crooked street of the village he has settled upon for the night's repose, looking keenly for landmarks visible only to him in this country, where every village and every house is mate to all





SLEDGING SOUTHWARDS



the rest. Sometimes he will ask a question of one of the innumerable urchins. But generally he seems of himself to hit upon the desired domicile. Day after day he will take you the sixty versts, lead you to the village stores to replenish the supply of candles or sugar, bring you surely to food and shelter at night, and take off all the burden of care for the outcome of each day's journey.

If for the third member of your personal suite you can get an old-time servant to keep the guns clean, build the camp-fires when midday tea is to be taken out of doors, bring in the baggage and rally the best resources of each halting-place, you are doubly lucky. You will be sedulously tended, and be treated partly as a prince, partly as a helpless baby.

Of this order is Jacov Titoff. Not the smallest personal service that he can render will you be permitted to do for yourself. The telling of unpleasant truths will be carefully avoided, however certain the ultimate revelation. Though honest beyond question, he pays you the naïve compliment of relying upon your generosity in all the little matters that concern provisions and petty luxuries. He will open the package which he is carrying back from the *torgovlia* to extract matches and cigarettes for his own delectation, and will rifle unstintingly the reserve of canned *sardinki*. He cheerfully freezes himself waiting for deer, and stumbles up miles of snowy mountain in the beats. He is always in good humor, and without complaint for whatever comes.



He is ready anywhere, at any time, to sleep or drink vodka.

Thus outfitted and manned, take your place, muffled in furs, and seated on the felt sleeping-blankets. Guns are at your side, the bag of provisions is in front, your own little ponies paw the snow. They start off now, trotting and galloping beneath the *duga*. The air is frosty, clear, and thrilling as wine; the snow is feathery and uncrusted, as when it fell months back; bells are jingling, and the driver is crying his alternate endearments and curses upon the shaggy ponies. Down the long rock-flanked river valleys, amid birch and pine forests, you will skim, by unwonted paths, through out-of-the-world villages, to see in their own homes the red-bloused peasants, the women spinning at the wheel, the peddlers and priests, the traveling Mohammedan doctors, the rough Buriats, miners and merchants, along the white way.

The smooth main road is left now for newly broken sledge-trails across fields and over snow-covered marshland. Every available river is utilized as a highway, for along its winding length the path, smooth and level, is marked like a boulevard by the evergreen saplings planted by villagers to guide the winter traveler. One can pierce the districts flanking the Chickoya's gorges, reachable at other seasons only by breakneck climbs. And one can see the real Siberia.

On this first night of his incumbency, Ivan Kurb-

ski lodges us with friends. He leaves us for a moment while he enters the yard by the wicket-gate to make due announcement, and the ponies hang their tired frost-covered heads. Your own bows under an equal fatigue. But the wait is very brief. Soon the big double gates of the log-stockaded courtyard open. The horses of their own accord turn in, and swing up to the steps of the house. You are handed out like an invalid grand duke, and are welcomed at the threshold, with a hard hand-shake, by a red-bloused peasant who ushers you up the steps, across the low-eaved portico, and through the square felt-padded door into the big living-room.

As we all enter, Ivan and Jacov, caps in hand, bow and make the sign of the cross toward the grouped ikons high up in the corner opposite the door. The saints have guarded you on the way — are not thanks the devoir? Then you, as head of the party, must salute, with a "*Zdravstvoutie*," your host, the old *Hazan* father of the peasant who, wearing a gray blouse sprayed with vivid flowers at breast and wrists, sits on a bench beside the window. Now you may sit down beside the massive table on the other bench, which is built along the whole length of the log walls, and survey the curious world into which you have fallen.

A woman of middle age, clad in bright red, is busy with a long hoe-like instrument pushing pots into a great square oven six feet high, ten feet to a side, and spotlessly whitewashed. To her right, in the



room beside the oven, is a girl of fifteen or sixteen, rolling brown rye-dough on a little table, in perilous proximity to a trap-door leading into some dark nether region. An old bent woman gravitates between the two. Glancing up, one meets the wondering eyes of three sleepy blinking urchins, who peer down in solemn interest from a big cushion-covered shelf, two feet beneath the ceiling. Looking about to locate the muffled sound of crows and clucks, one discovers, beneath the oven, a corral of chickens, pecking with perky bills at the whitewash for lime. On the floor is sitting a little girl crooning some endless refrain to a baby in a sapling-swung cradle.

"The *gaspadine* will take *chai*?" asks the patriarch. From the woman's room beside the oven the girl brings a samovar. She sets it on the floor, beside an earthenware jar standing near the door, and dips out the water to fill it. Then with tongs she takes a long red ember from a niche cut in the side of the oven, and drops it down the samovar funnel. Round loaves of frozen rye-bread are brought out and set to thaw. A plate of eggs is produced from the cellar. One rolls off as the girl passes, and falls to the floor. Instinctively you start. Not so the others. The egg has dropped like a stone and rolled away. But it is quietly picked up and put to boil with the rest. It is frozen so solidly that there is not even a crack on the shell.

Jacov meanwhile is making earnest inquiry of the "old one."



"How are your cows, Dimitri Ivan'ich? Your horses, are they well? And your sheep? All well? And have you had good crops? Is there still plenty of pasture-land in this village? *Good!* *GOOD!*—and how is your wife?"

Poor withered wife; she is bustling around looking after the children, and trying to help her daughter-in-law. Not so the "old one," the ancient man of the family to whom these courteous questions are addressed. The patriarch stopped his labors at fifty, and sits slumbering away his second prospective half-century in honored idleness. "Everybody works but father!"

The samovar is humming now, and the table is decked with a homespun-linen cloth ready for the *obeid*. The first formality, as dinner is about to begin, must be observed. The various members of the family turn, one after another, toward the ikons, reverently crossing themselves. Then the host produces a bottle of a colorless liquid, shakes it up and down, and brings the bottom sharply against his palm. The cork shoots out, and he pours into a little glass a drink of the national beverage, vodka, which one is supposed to swallow at a gulp.

Every time a guest enters, a bottle of vodka is brought out, costing 49½ kopecks, half the average day-laborer's pay in this district. On feast-days the visitors go from house to house drinking, — and these *prasdnyks* number some fifty-two days in the Russian year. Every business deal is baptized with

vodka. Every family festival, the return of a son from the army, the marriage of a daughter, — all are vodka-soaked. As one passes through villages on a saint's day, he may meet a dozen reeling figures and hear the maudlin songs from the courtyards where the men have gathered. The part played by vodka in the people's life is appalling.

In the house now, all, beginning with the "old one," partake of this stimulant, solemnly gulping down their fiery potions. Then the family sits down in due rank and order, the "old one" in the cosiest corner, with the samovar convenient to his hand. You, as the guest, are beside him on the bench that lines the wall, then comes Jacov, next the son, then Ivan Kurbski the *yamshik*, and on stools along the inner side of the table, the grandmother and assorted infants. The mother alternates between the table and the oven.

The samovar is tapped for tea as the first course of the evening. For all who come, tea is the obligatory offering, in a cup if the visitor be familiar, but for special honor in a glass with a ragged lump of sugar hammered from a big cone-shaped loaf. This one nibbles as he drinks, for sugar is a luxury, not to be used extravagantly. The brown rye-bread, which has been thawed at the gaping oven-door, is next brought out, and raw blubber-like fat pork, in little squares, eaten as butter, and boiled potatoes, and the boiled eggs, curdled from the freezing.

At Little Christmas, the *prasdnik* day which

comes in early January, *pelmenis*, or dumplings, egg-patties (grease-cooked), and meat will be served, with cranberries and white bread. In Butter-Week everybody gorges on buttered *blinnies*, or pancakes, garnished with sour cream. Even a substance showing rudimentary traces of a common ancestry with cake may be produced.

As the shadows of the northern evening close down, a piece of candle is lighted to-night in our honor. Generally the burning brands for the samovar, propped in a niche cut at the height of a man's shoulder in the outer edge of the oven, throw the only light. Presently the candle is used up and the brands give a fitful flame, leaving the corners black as Erebus.

From the baby's cradle comes now a plaintive cry, and one of the little girls goes over to dandle it. Up and down, to and fro, for hours together she works, singing her monotonous lullaby. The children, who have been lifted down from their eyrie above the oven, play on the sanded floor. The men remain oblivious and smoke their pipes, letting fall an occasional word, which comes forth muffled from their great beards.

Ox-like, all sit for a while, sipping occasional cups of tea. Then the woman and the girl go out and get wood, remove the pots from inside the oven, and build up a roaring fire. The children are rolled up for sleep in their little blankets on the floor. The men reach for their furs and felts. They go to the



left of the oven, the women to the right, and the children are between, making a long row in front of the fire. Soon all are sunk in heavy sleep. The little girl alone sits up to rock the baby. As you doze off in the genial warmth of the newly-stoked oven she is still crooning her lullaby in the dim fitful light of the firebrands.

Through the long night all lie like logs. Toward morning, as the oven's heat dies down and the bitter cold creeps in, sleep becomes uneasy. One stirs and then another. Finally the woman rises and wakes the girl, and they go out into the cold for wood and water. Presently the men bestir themselves, get up, and wait for their tea. The rising sun of another day casts its rays through the windows.

As the sleepers one by one arise and stretch, their blankets are folded by the watchful woman of the house, and thrust up on the children's shelf. Some of the men go across the room and let the water from the little brass can in the corner trickle over their hands. Some do not do even this.

For the outlander of washing proclivities, peculiar problems are offered by a country of no wash-bowls, no soap, only occasional towels, and the tea samovar as the only source of hot water, a copious draft on which not only postpones breakfast but compels some of the women of the family to go out and chop ice for a new supply. Necessity evolves the tea-tumbler toilet method as our solution. You borrow one of the precious tea-glasses from the old woman,

fill it to overflowing with warm water from the samovar, and prop it up on the window-sill. The top inch of water is absorbed into a sponge which is put aside for future use. Into the remaining two and a half inches a soaped handkerchief is dipped, with which one washes one's face, touching tenderly the spots recently frozen. The reserved sponge will do to rinse off the detritus of this first operation. Two and a quarter inches of water are left, of which half an inch may be poured over the tooth-brush. With an inch and three quarters left, one has ample to lather for a shave, as well as to wet the nail-brush which is to scrub one's hands that will be rinsed with the sponge. Half an inch remains finally to clean the brushes and razors. "There you are!" With two glasses one may have a bath.

When the breakfast of rye-bread and tea is ended, the men go out to their various winter tasks, of which the most serious is felling trees in the forests, cutting them up, and getting home the wood. The women keep stolidly at their cooking, cleaning, child-tending, and turn to the spinning-wheel and hand-loom when other work does not press.

In the weeks that follow, each night brings us to a different home, but never to a changed environment or atmosphere. This type of life is found, not only among the Trans-Baikal peasantry, but throughout all Siberia. The log houses down the long straggly village streets look out upon the same wooden-walled courtyards, — the women peer-

ing from their little windows as the sleighs jingle past. The same ikons with burning lamps look down as you enter; the same whitewashed oven and shelf and cradle are there as you push open the felted door. The women of each district wear the same traditional costume. The bearded host produces the same vodka. One of the most impressive sights, when one drives out before dawn into the frosty air, is to see at almost the same moment from every chimney the black smoke roll upwards, then dwindle to a thin gray streak. Each woman has risen and heaped green wood into the cooking-oven. It is as if one will actuated simultaneously all the people.

At places the master of the house has a trade, shoemaking or saddlery, and the big living-room is littered with pieces of leather and waxed cord as he stitches. Sometimes there are hunters in the family, and ancient flintlock muskets rest on the antlered trophies. The men gather together occasionally to drive deer. But in general, as the winter is the men's idle time, a little wood is cut, the cattle are seen to, and for the rest, talk, tea, and tobacco, until it is time to eat and sleep once more. The women on the other hand seem to be always occupied, but they are not discontented.

The customs and institutions which bind together the household group are unique. In all families the *Hazan* is supreme. To him first of all, strangers pay their respects. To him every member of the house-





PEASANT



VILLAGE STOREKEEPER

SIBERIAN TYPES



hold comes for advice as to whom he or she shall marry, and which calf shall be sold. Howsoever hard of hearing he may be, there is related to him all the events of the neighborhood with infinite minuteness. He is the repository of all moneys earned by logging for a neighboring mine-owner, or for bringing out to the railroad the sledge-loads of rye. As head of the family he can summon a forty-year-old son from the merchant's counter in Krasnoyarsk, or his nephew from the fur-traffic in Irkutsk, and bid him return to his peasant hut. If a grandson wishes to go to Nerchinsk to seek his fortune, the "old one's" consent must be obtained before the youth receives his passport. It is all at the patriarch's sovereign pleasure.

We come one day upon a vexatious example of this ancestral authority. A report reaches us, by chance, of a hibernating bear's hole some fifty versts away, which one of the peasants has located. The host, noting our interest, asks: —

"Would the *gaspadine* like to hunt him?"

There is no question on this score, so the peasant is quickly brought to the hut. Numerous friends crowd in with him, for one person's business is everybody's business in these primitive communities. For a liberal equivalent in roubles the man agrees to act as guide, and the start is to be made early next morning. All is arranged and he goes out with his body-guard to make the necessary preparations. By and by there is a stir. Our sledge-



driver comes in with a long face. Then half a dozen peasants add themselves to the family quota in the hut. Soon more come, until the stifling room is as populous as a Mir Assembly. They are all talking at once, and there is a great hubbub. At length one voice louder than the rest seems to call a decision for them all. They turn backward again, and with many gesticulations bustle through the felted doors into the snowy streets, and through the village to a house which they enter in a body as if with intent of sacking it. Instead they bring out and over to our hut a slight bearded old man, bent with the weight of many winters — the father of the peasant guide.

Humble but resolute, he faces the assembly.

“No, I cannot consent that he lead the *gaspadine* to the Medvetch Dom.”

“But assure the ‘old one’ that his son will only point out the den and then go away.”

The “old one” answers: —

“The bear does not come to steal my pigs. Why should I get him shot? Besides, a bear chewed up three Buriats last year. It would be sad to be devoured even for the *gaspadine’s* fifty roubles.”

The reward is doubled, and forty kopecks’ worth of vodka produced. Many advisers give aid, and one suggests that “the son may mount a tree one hundred *sagenes* from the mansion of the bear!”

But still the father refuses. “No, I will not allow him to take out his horse and hunting-sledge.”

The son, whose half-dozen full-grown children are

looking on, shakes his head dolefully. A big eagle-nosed peasant, of hunting proclivities, comes in.

"I will give my hunting-sleigh if he will go," he calls.

But the shrill voice of the "old one" rings out again, "I do not consent. I do not consent. My son shall not go to the mansion of the bear."

The guide shrugs his shoulders. We have hit the ledge of Russian authority. No one will budge. The old man has his way.

As is the management of the household, so is that of the village. While the *Hazan* rules over the common property of the family (*izba*), the village elder (*Selski Starosta*) is guardian over the grouped households which make up the Mir. As the household goods belong to no one individual, but are common property, so the land farmed by the villagers is a joint possession whose title rests with the commune. The family is held for the debts and behavior of all of its individuals; and similarly, with certain limitations, the village community is answerable for the taxes and discipline of each of its members.

On a humble scale it is the spirit of socialism incarnate. Within the commune no capitalistic employers, no wage-taking worker-class, no castes exist, and no individuals are born with special privileges. No distinctions of rank or fortune lift some above their fellows. The manner of living is the same for all. Each head of a family has a right of vote, and elects by the freest, simplest means his own

judges and village rulers. The land, the source of livelihood, is divided among the producers by their own unfettered suffrage.

The chief man of the community — he who drums out the voters to the Mir, lists those who do not work sufficiently on the pope's field, and reports the toll of taxes to the Government — is simply an elderly peasant clothed with a little brief authority. There is no household in the average village which is looked up to as more genteel than the rest. No such distinctions as prevail in America will reveal that such a farmer's family is musical and well-read, such another has traveled to Niagara Falls, such a third has blue-ribbon sheep. In Russian peasant circles all is equality, almost identity.

Here is presented the best example in the world to-day of an applied system based upon the communistic as opposed to the individualistic theory. It is therefore of more than local interest. Most apparent of all results is the economic stagnation which has accompanied the elimination of special rewards for special efforts. The man, more daring or more far-sighted than his fellows, who would take for himself the risk of a new enterprise, who would mortgage his house to buy a reaper, or would seek a farther market, is fettered by his plodding neighbors. His financial obligations, if he fail, fall on the others of a common family, whose members have a veto on his freedom of action. His own and his neighbor's fields by the allotment are proportioned in extent to



the old hand-labor standard. A machine has few to serve until the fields are readjusted to a new standard. While technically a man may buy or rent lands outside the commune and may introduce a new rotation of crops or agricultural tools, actually the inertia of the peasants bound to him by the brotherhood of the Mir weighs the adventurous one hopelessly to the earth. Who can persuade an assembly of bearded conservatism-steeped "old ones" to buy for the Mir the costly new machines? Perhaps, with the visible demonstration of profits which private enterprise could make under an individual régime, the doubting elders might consent. But who is there to show them when every village checks back the swift to the lock-step of the clod?

Nor is it simply in material things that communism manifests its lotus-fruit in these country hamlets. Ignorance, unashamed, broods over them one and all. What a dead level is revealed by the fact that one peasant in a populous village on the Chickoya, our guide upon a shooting-trip, could not tell time by a watch, and had never seen such an invention.

Some instances are related where the more ambitious men of a Mir have clubbed together to bring in a teacher at their own expense. The Semieski, or "Old Believers," big, red-bearded, obstinate men, settled in Urluck in the Zabaikal, who dissent from the sixteenth-century revisions of Bishop Nikon, will not send children to Slavonic schools and may have schools of their own. But these cases are rare.

There is among the peasantry almost no education and comparatively little desire for it, yet how far this sentiment is from being a racial or national failing the crowds that come to the city universities bear ample witness. In one of the villages a teacher from Chita is established in the side room of a peasant's house, wherein one night we sojourn. He has been appointed by the Commissioner of Schools of the Cossack Government. He is of a good Nerchinsk family and is brother to an elector of delegates to the second Duma. He is one of the "Intellectuals" — the student class which forms almost a caste by itself. A free-thinker, keenly interested in the rights of man, a Social Democrat by politics, he goes shooting on Sunday with some peasant cronies. He plays Russian airs on his *balilika* and gets the peasant's daughter to dance for the guest. He produces specimens of antimony and chalcopyrite, and discusses the geological probability of finding silver or platinum ores in these districts. Photographs of the amateur-kodak variety are along the walls, and on a table in the corner are a mandolin and a pile of books. We pick up a volume, — "L'Évolution de la Moralité," by Charles Letourneau. The young owner, who consumes a prodigious number of Moscow cigarettes, tells of the indifference to education among the people.

"Here we have a school in a big village, with two other communities near by. There are easily five hundred households, — with how many children in



each, you can see. Yet we have but thirty boys at school. What can we do?"

He is discouraged, this single "Intellectual" of Gotoi. Profoundly solicitous for the future, an idealist, boundless in hopes for the good of his race, he sees the younger generation submerged at the threshold of opportunity by the inertia of the old.

"What good will it do for him to read?' ask the peasants, when I urge, 'Send your boy to the school.' What can I say? The boy comes from my class after two years, and goes out with the men. He has no money to buy books if he wants them. No newspapers come to the village, no printed matter whatever, save that on the pictures which they buy in the fairs. In a few years all I have taught is forgotten. The darkness is over these villages. One must lift them despite themselves."

Beyond the range of the village communes, no people show a more eager zeal for knowledge and study. In the cities almost all of the younger generation can read and write. The school-boys, with their big black ear-covering caps, smart blue coats, brightened with rows of brass buttons, and knapsacks of books, are one's regular morning sight. "Realistic" and "Materialistic" schools are established in many towns.

The apathy of the rural element is to be laid at the door of the system which hinders those within the confines of the communes from reaping the fruits of special sacrifice and effort. No one



attempts to raise himself in the Mir, where the dead weight of those bound to him is so hopeless. If any boy, brighter than the rest, follow some lodestar, it must be to a city. The aspirant must bury ambition, or leave the drudging Mir with its toll of taxes and recruits. He will not study law before the wood-fire as did Lincoln in his log cabin.

The cloud of deadening communism over their lives utters itself in the words continuously on the peasants' tongues. It is the northern equivalent for that buttress of despotism — "*mañana*." The possibility of the Russian condition is "*nietchevo!*" If the red cock (*krasnai petuk*) has crowed and has left the forty householders with charred embers where stood their homes, "*nietchevo!*" They build it up of wood and straw, with the oven chimney passing through as before. Does a raging toothache torture, "It is the will of God, — *nietchevo!*" If the weary day's climb sees a gameless evening, "*nietchevo!*" If the son is frozen in the troop-train, "*nietchevo!*" If the Little Father send to Yakutsk the other one who has gone to the city, "*nietchevo!*" Is the unrevised tax for a family of ten men pressing down upon three, "It has got to be borne, — *nietchevo!*" It is this bowing to fate as a thing begotten of the gods, when it is a force to be fought here on earth; the long-taught submission to evil, when evil is to be conquered, to limitation when opportunity is to be won, — it is this spirit which is holding rural Russia still in her Dark Ages.

The origin of the present village-system goes back to the time of serfage, when the overlord held his dependents herded together for easy ruling. That it extended to unfettered Siberia, where the rewards of individual effort were so obvious, cannot be laid entirely to old custom or government compulsion. Nor is it to be explained by the early necessity for protection against wild beasts or hostile natives. The same dangers threatened the pioneers of our own country. Perhaps the Russian spirit of gregariousness lies at the root of the fact that in the Czar's domains the peasant lives away from his fields to be near his neighbors, while our people live away from their neighbors to be near their fields. Whatever the cause, the outcome is that practically the whole rural population, even in the most thinly settled districts, is gathered into villages, and owns the lands in common.

The system makes enormously for homogeneity, welding, solidarity. The people are a "mass." Units are lost in unity. Nothing save Nature's imprint and law of individuality, that decree under which every created thing is some way different from every other, keeps the Russian peasant from quite losing his birthright. The commune, vodka, and resignation are the incubi of Siberia. In the towns and cities gather the energetic natures that have climbed out and above them. What these have done, their allied people — the peasants — can do. Beyond the horizon of the latter's narrow



lives lies still the borderland of possibilities. One cannot doubt the vigor of the stock, nor the certainty of its rise. This quality of rugged worth is the basis of all the great advance that the pioneers and the city populations have made. It is only in the Mirs, frozen fast in their lethargy of communism, that resurrection seems such a far-off dream. The way is long for the peasants of Siberia—long and toilsome. But their vast patience is allied to as vast a courage, and both will lift them into the larger day.

The measure passed by the last Duma, decreeing the division of the Mir lands in severalty, and private ownership of property, will be one of the most momentous and far-reaching enactments ever legislated for a people. It should end for rural Russia the stagnation, and open an era of mighty endeavor and achievement.

There are many races here among the serenely tolerant Siberians, undiscriminated against and uncoerced. While one of the Orthodox may not abjure the state religion without severe punishment, those born to an alien faith are unmolested by official or proselyting pope. "God has given them their faith as he has given us ours," is the Russian rule.

This medley of races beneath the Russian banners gives to one's earliest contact the conception of a heterogeneous disorganized jumble of nations and peoples. But closer acquaintance impresses upon one the dominating and surviving qualities innate



in the Slav, whose unalterable solidarity is beneath and behind the kaleidoscopic types of aboriginal tribes and exiled sectarians. By race-absorption, like that which has evolved Celts, Danes, Saxon, and Norsemen into English; British, Dutch, Swedes, Germans and Italians into Americans, the Slav is dissolving, transmuting to his own type and moulding to his own institutions the varied peoples.

Though the heterogeneous blood adds to the total of Siberian country life, it is the Slavic race that determines the permanent order of this great land. Primarily too it is the peasantry who shape its destiny. Their possibilities are the limit of Russia's ascent. Their condition is therefore of far deeper than sightseeing interest to the student. Unlike the picturesque peasantry of Holland, here they are the foundations of the state, forming not an insignificant minority but ninety per cent of the population.

Somewhat of a new spirit flickers here and there in Siberian hamlets. The peasant is superior to his Russian brother. The traditions of serfdom were broken by his severance from the old environment, and wider lands give him an abundance unknown save in a few favored parts of Europe. The political exiles have through the centuries added an upsurge of independence and personal self-consciousness, which is markedly higher than the Oriental humility of Occidental Russia.

The influence of the criminal, as distinct from the political convict, is felt primarily in the cities, such as

Irkutsk and Vladivostok, to which the time-expired men drift. The convict element is always met with. It has been customary to billet a condemned, who was not wanted at home, upon some out-of-the-way village, giving him a passport for its confines alone. The victim might have been a Moscow professor or a locomotive engineer, but in the Mir he must farm the land given him. Naturally such seed as this planted in Siberian hamlets does not produce the traditional peasant faith in God and the Czar so faithfully preached by the popes.

Another influence making for upheaval is the returning recruit. We are in a peasant house when a *soldat* comes back to the family from his service. If he has not brought any great burden of salary, he has accumulated tales enough of the outer world to hold in breathless excitement the circle of friends and relatives which gathers at once when the tinkling sleigh-bells and the barking have announced to the village his return.

Far down the street is heard the jingle of his sledge. It brings every girl to her peep-hole window, and every boy from his sawing to the courtyard door. At the gateway where the newcomer turns in, he is heralded by the commotion of the household guardians, wolf-like in appearance and nature. Everybody within the important house runs to the door. The village knows now which family is making local history. The arrival is accompanied already by two or three men who have recognized him



as he descends. He tramps in with military firmness of tread, head erect. Before he greets the grandfather even, he makes the sign of the cross to the holy ikons, and, bowing down, touches his lips to the floor. Then comes the respectful kiss to the old man, next to the mother, while the younger brother, soon to go to service himself, stands awkwardly by, and the little children look half-dubiously at a form scarcely known after his four years of absence.

Then there is a scurrying of the grown and half-grown daughters to prepare *chai* and to produce the *pelmenis* and brown bread. The villagers drift in one by one, cross themselves, and speak their greetings, until the little house is packed, and as hot as the steam-room of a *banno*. The vodka-bottle is out and everybody has settled down for an indefinite stay. The soldier's tales of war and garrison duty and government and revolution hold the family and the audience breathless through the long evening. As you drop asleep, the hero is still reciting and gesticulating. The guests in departing will be careful not to stumble over you, so *nietchevo*.

In one of the houses where we put up, a shop adjoins the big living-room. It has dingy recesses from which hatchets and the commoner farm utensils can be produced, shelves of homespun cloth, and gaudy cottons for the men's blouses, and beads for the women's bonnets. Here, as in the country-stores of our own land, during the long idle winter days there is always a crowd and endless discus-



sion of the village events, — the health of each other's cows, births, marriages, deaths, drafts into the army, taxes. Even in this remoteness something of the echo of great Russia's struggle is heard over the shopkeeper's tea-cups. We hum, unthinking, a bar of *Die Beide Grenadier*, in which a refrain of the *Marseillaise* occurs.

A peasant looks quickly up. "It is not allowed, that song," he says.

"Why not?"

"That is the song of the strikers."

"But the *gaspadine* is a foreigner. He may sing it."

"Yes," says the peasant, "he may sing it, but I may not. Would that I might!"

One meets quaint characters in this inland journeying — veteran soldiers of the Turkestan advance; "*sabbato* sectarians," who keep Saturday holy rather than Sunday; austere "Old Believers," traveling peddlers, teamsters who have tramped beside their ponies over three provinces. One comes upon peripatetic Mussulman doctors, in snug-fitting black coats and small black skull-caps, who show their Arabic-worded road-maps and much-thumbed medical works bound in worn leather. Beside their plates at table the kindly hostess puts piles of leathery bread, unleavened, and made without lard in deference to their caste rules.

A shop in one village is kept by a Chinaman, who, lettered like most of his race, seems a far



PEASANT TYPES





shrewder and more intellectual person than the uneducated Russian peasants. He invites the stranger to drink tea that his special caravan brings, and presents Chinese candy with the courtesy of a grandee. When, in reciprocity, the traveler buys sugar for his *chai*, he receives it wrapped in paper covered with hieroglyphics and exhaling the faint unmistakable Chinese odor.

Going always southward, one begins to meet more and more frequently the villages of the Mongol-descended Buriats. "*Bratskie*" (brotherly people), the Russians call them, for despite the forbidding aspect that flat Mongolian features, high thin noses, yellow-brown skins, and big squat bodies give them, no more peaceful, harmless, and hospitable people exist. They are great and fearless hunters, unexcelled riders, and though still only on the threshold of civilization, are rapidly moving to better things.

All phases of the advance from the nomad to the agricultural stage may be studied among them. The pastoral Buriats, decorated like the Chinese with queues, ride around after their flocks. Their villages lie far away from the lines of convoys, unmarked on the Ministry map, which one is supposed to be following. Each family occupies a little windowless wooden hut, some fifteen feet in diameter. In front of it is planted a pole, carrying at the top a weather-faded pennant, the colors of which in Buriat heraldry indicate the tribe and name of

the occupant. Behind the hut are stacks of hay and a wooden corral with sheep and horses. Beside it stands the summer tent, of felt, looking like a great inverted bowl. It is empty in winter, save for a shrine with grotesque pictured gods, fronted by offerings.

In the homes of these least advanced Buriats we loiter no longer than we must. The wooden house which shelters them is hermetically sealed, and is crowded with people and animals. Fenced off in a corner of the first that receives us is a corral of thirteen lambs, which at uncertain moments begin to bleat suddenly in unison, producing, with startling effect, a prodigious volume of sound. When one has been roused from sleep half a dozen times a night by this chorus, he is strongly inspired to move on. The men are out during the day looking to their flocks. The women spend a good part of their time sewing furs or making felt. They are very unclean, and it is a decided relief to get out of their homes, to which the cold compels one to have recourse on a long journey. In spring, with great and understandable relief, these semi-nomads take to their felt tents and move where fancy and pasturage dictate.

One grade higher are those Buriats who have learned some rudimentary farming from the Orthodox. You will see the men threshing on a level floor beside the corral. They are dressed in long blue or magenta fur-lined cloaks and colored cone-shaped hats. Other Buriats are permanently resident in

the Slavonic settlements, and send their rosy-faced children to school. They mix with the Russians, subject to almost no disabilities, and their better classes contract inter-racial marriages, which seem, to an outsider, at least, completely happy and successful.

It is no small thing, this which Russian rule has done for the Buriats. A people whom any other nation would spurn in racial ostracism, perhaps would eliminate, live side by side with the good-natured Slav in perfect accord, progressing in civilization and material well-being as high as the individual can aspire to and attain.

They are ruled by their own chiefs, whose sway is tempered by the benevolent supervision of the general government. They are represented in the Duma by men of their own selection. They freely worship the Buddhist Burhan in their lamasery near Cellinginsk, without pope to preach or missionary to proselyte. Their easy citizenship is unharassed by money taxes, and their only obligation is Cossack service in the army. But Cossack service to a Buriat is what a picnic is to a boy. Riding around on horseback, rationed by the Government, visiting a city with real tobacco and vodka sometimes attainable, sleeping on a straw-stuffed mattress with no tethered lambs to murder sleep, when they are used to a sheepskin on the dirt floor, — all this is luxury of blissful memory, during the years of the reserve. The net result is that the Buriats



are entirely content. They are progressing all along the line, and are being made useful to the nation, not by unpayable taxation, but by the service which they are so especially fitted to render.

As one nears Chinese territory, by the lower waters of the Chickoya River, the villages of Slavic colonists who hold their land on tax-paying peasant tenure, have given place to the Buriat tribesmen and to the *stanitzas* of the Cossack guard that occupy the pale of land flanking the frontier. Within this border-belt, every village *stanitza* holds its quota of Cossacks. These soldiers are for the most part descendants of the levies from the Don region, transplanted to the Trans-Baikal by the Government's despotic hand in the eighteenth century, and since then forming an hereditary military caste. Many of them are bearded Slavs, indistinguishable, save for their accoutrements, from their more peaceful neighbors. Others are of a peculiar cast of countenance, due to the mixture with the Asiatic tribes in ancient times, when the hunted people fled to their ancestors' asylum, the territories beyond the Volga and on the Don. There is great variation in type among the imported Cossacks. Most are Orthodox, but a very large number are "Old Believers," or Semieski. In all the houses now hang the yellow cap and the uniform coat, which must be ever ready against the call of duty. Arms are in the corners of the rooms, and everything has a military look, in marked contrast to the peasant homes. Crude,

highly-colored prints of Japanese defeats, which circulated broadcast in Russia during the war, share the attention usually devoted exclusively to holy ikons. Portraits of Generals Linevitch and Kuropatkin, and Admiral Alexiev, are tacked to the walls. In one house we saw hanging a prized silver watch, one of those distributed by General Rennenkamp among the soldiers of his command.

One of our Cossack hosts is an old man, Orthodox, and of Russian origin, but with some ancient Asiatic blood, for only a stringy beard grows on his kindly, wrinkled face. With reluctant pride he tells of his three sons away on service, leaving but himself and two daughters at home. With frank happiness he shows you his medals. Every soldier at the front received a round brass service-medal; his, however, a silver cross with St. George and the Dragon on it, is given for valor. He will not drink the vodka he offers you, — rheumatism. But in order that you may smoke some alleged tobacco that greatly interests him because he gathered it himself by the roadside, in Manchuria, he starts up his pipe despite the dust-induced coughs that it begets. He is a kindly, loquacious old man.

Another Cossack, privileged to the broad yellow top on his cap and the yellow stripe on his trousers, is, for the time, our guide and gun-carrier. His flat strongly-mustached face is open and ingenuous. He tells of his *sotnia* in Manchuria.

“I was with Mitschenko at the front during the



war, in his great raid," he says. "Ten of our *sotnia* of a hundred were killed, forty wounded. We got behind the Japanese and burned four hundred of their wagons. We had two hundred rounds of cartridges, and more when we wanted them. But food often not, and meat sometimes not for two months. We had thirty Buriats in our hundred, but the Verhneudinsk Polk were almost all Buriats."

In one house where ikons, oven, bench, and stockade reveal the Slav peasant's home, the mirrors are shrouded for their forty days' veiling. It is a place of death. The owner was a full-blooded Buriat married to a Russian woman. In silent grief she plods through her mechanically-executed duties. Their son, in red blouse, is in prayer beside his father's body. They have pressed us to remain. The advent of strangers seems to distract their thoughts a little. From outside comes a hail, and heavily there dismounts from his pony an old grizzled Buriat Cossack. He has ridden two hundred versts to pay this last respect to his friend.

His military training makes the Cossack a little less gentle than the average peasant. When off duty, hen-roosts near a garrison are in some danger. For the rest, he is naturally brave, generous, and will share the chicken he has just ridden forty versts to lift. He will give his pipe to be smoked, and will behave with a thoughtfulness and courtesy that is not found in finer circles. His children have the free unrepressed air which speaks of genial home kindli-



ness and sympathy. His wife is far from being a mute drudge.

Assuredly this is not the Cossack of legendary fame, the "implacable knout" of the czars. It requires almost courage, in the face of the savage of literary tradition, to assert that the Cossack is other than a dehumanized monster of oppression. Why then did he cut down with utter ruthlessness the helplessly frozen grenadiers of the Grande Armée? Why will he massacre indiscriminately men, women, and children on his path from Tien-tsin to Peking? Why will he beat with his knotted whip the striking girl students of Kiev? Who shall tell? To a certain extent he is callous to suffering because of a defective imagination. He will ride his best horse to death if need be. Loving it, he will yet leave it out in weather forty below. He is cruel, often, because he has not the substituting gift needed to translate another's suffering into terms of his own. He is valorous because, even so far as regards himself, he cannot think beyond the immediate privation into the future of imaged dread, so he goes fearlessly into unpondered peril. He offends the traditional ideas of humanity and civilization in killing people, because of his failure to recognize a wider radius of sympathy than circles his own tribe. But if the tribe circumscribes his idea, the nation circumscribes the sympathies of others who make tariffs to crush an extra-national industry and raise armies to destroy a foreign liberty. But if outside the Cossack's re-

cognized circle, you are to him beyond the pale, in his home, you are, *ipso facto*, a member of the tribe, a brother in whose defense he will gayly risk his life, and spend his substance.

The deeds that are recalled to the Cossack's discredit often fall for judgment really to those who plan and issue the orders which loyalty makes him obey. Where his allegiance has been once given, there it remains. His *hataman* is more than a superior officer; he is the chief of the clan, the head of all the tribe, and the subordinate is united to him by the traditions of centuries of mutual dependence. Where other than blood-kin officers are put over the Cossack he mutinies, as when, in Manchuria, Petersburg-schooled lieutenants were drafted and raised to command. But give him his own rightful chief, then if the Cossack is told to do something it is done. He will cross himself and jump from the tower, as in Holland did Peter the Great's guardsman at the word of the chief to whom he had given his loyalty.

The savage valor of the warriors in Verestchagin's picture, *The Cossack's Answer*, is typical of the spirit of these soldiers. Surrounded by battalions of the foe, fated to annihilation when the summons to surrender is rejected, the leaders, laughing uproariously in approval, hear their *hataman* dictate the insulting reply that dooms them all. If one would ride to China he can have no better guards and comrades than the Cossacks.

We are close to the border now, climbing the last crest which separates the Chickoya from the Cel-linga Valley, our toiling tired ponies white with frost. All day the long sweep of the hills has been taken through heavy snow. The landscape is barren, desolate, and lifeless save for the occasional sight of a distant Buriat horseman. The sun is slowly sinking.

The crest at last! The driver points with his whip to the dark masses of houses below, wreathed in the curling smoke of the evening fires. Here and there is a brilliantly painted building or tower, and sleighs and horsemen are passing in the streets. "Troitzkosavsk!" he says. He points further ahead to another more distant town, whose most dominant features are the great square tea-caravansaries and a mighty church, green-domed, with a gilded far-glimmering cross. The huddled houses end sharply toward the south, as if a ruler had marked off their limit in a straight stretch of white. Along this pale are little square sentry-boxes, striped black and white. In the evening sun a distant glint of steel flashes from the bayonet of a pacing sentry. "Ki-ahta!" the driver says. Then, across the white strip where a wooden stockade girds a settlement of gray-walled compounds, fluttering with tiny flags, gay with lofty towers and temples flaunting their red eaves, he points a third time: "Kitai!" (China).

He picks up the reins, and lifts the whip; "Scurry!" he cries to the horses. The ponies leap



forward, throwing their weight against duga and collar, and we sweep down the hill toward the nearest Russian town, Troitzkosavsk, four versts from the border.

As we come down to the main road hard-by the town, officers of the garrison drive past with their spick-and-span fast trotters, city-wise, as one sees them in Irkutsk. Behind rolls a Mongol cart driven by a burly Chinaman. A Buriat, come to town to replenish his supply of powder and ball, follows on his shaggy pony.

Down a long street, flanked first by log cabins with courtyards and fences like those in the peasant villages, then by stucco-plastered houses, cement-walled government buildings, and great white-washed churches, we pass and reach the centre of the town. Then we turn up a side street to the house of a mine-owner, to whom we are accredited.

Nicolai Vladimirovitch Tobagov meets us at the door of his log house, clad in gray flannel shirt and knee-boots. A not unnoteworthy product of Siberia is this man, — squarely built and yet wiry, with nervous strength expressed on his bearded face. He is self-made, risen from the masses. A peasant-boy, he started life as assistant to a surveyor, learning to read and write by his own efforts. During this apprenticeship he studied his chief's books on geology, by the light of the brands for the samovar in the peasants' houses where they were billeted nightly.

He located placer gold in a number of spots, at a time when the oblast was a lawless "no man's domain," without any legal means in existence for acquiring title to property. Guarding in silence his secret, he waited years, until at last a mining-law was enacted for the oblast where his prospects lay. When this law ultimately made private ownership possible, he started in to realize. A friend lent him the money for a mill, which he constructed, according to book-descriptions, on the model of those in California. At first it failed to work, and broke again and again. His riffles were set too steeply. They had let the gold scour away, and his neighbors reported that there was no gold to collect. But he fought it through to victory, returned every borrowed kopeck with interest, bought new machines, and prospered; till now, besides controlling several mines, he possesses a great domain in the river valley, some hundred versts away, with fields of wheat and rye and hay-meadows.

When the visitor has stamped the snow from his felt boots and emerged from his shaggy bearskin coat and hooded fur cap, he enters the main room, with its walls of great logs bare of ornament and showing the scorings of the axe, but clean as new-planed wood can be. Between the chinks straw and moss are packed to keep out the cold. Two great benches flank the sides of the room. Not a picture, not an ornament, not a curtain, not a drapery, not a shelf, breaks the plainness of the log wall, but here



and there are hung guns and rifles. In essentials this large house does not greatly differ from the typical peasant's dwelling. But a copy of the "Sibir" newspaper lies on the table, and photographs of the female members of the family are added to the many reproductions of relations in military dress, which the photographer has touched up with brilliant dashes of red, to pay tribute to the coat-lining, and white to indicate the gloves. Lamps replace the lowly tapers, and they burn before more gorgeously gilt ikons. The windows are double, with cotton-wool and strips of colored paper between. This is a great improvement on the single ice-crusted window, with its perpetual drippings down along the sill. There are the little sheet-iron stoves, whitewashed after the tradition of the oven; chairs with backs, as well as the square stools; and small rooms curtained off from each other. A clock hangs on the wall, and there are carpets on the floor. A large table stands at one end, on which is the ever-boiling samovar, which is nickel instead of brass.

We are made acquainted with the wife of the host, a stout matron of fine domestic proclivities. Though of humble origin, she has discarded her peasant shako and bandana-handkerchief headdress for a bonnet, and dispenses, as to the manner born, many luxuries. On the other hand, she has lost the robustness which keeps her peasant sisters fresh and hearty. Sewing-machines, and beds, and servants,



must exact toll even in Siberia. Her boys are clean-cut and intelligent. They go to school and are the future "Intellectuals" that are seeding Siberia. Sixteen children — eleven Nicolai Tobagov's own, five adopted in open-hearted generosity — sit down to four very solid meals a day in the big hall. Ivan Simeonski, *optovie* and *argove* merchant, and Nicita Baeschoef the lieutenant, traveling west on furlough, are stopping in this friendly house, and many other guests are here. The hospitality of the household is conducted on a scale of patriarchal magnificence.

Before our furs are fairly off, the host has called aloud for *obeid*. One's first formality is, as usual, to salute the ikons and the guests. One's second is to escape the scalding vodka, seventy proof, and then begin with the *zakuska* of ten cold dishes on the side table. There is black caviar from the Volga, though the rapid diminution of the supply has raised the price to ten roubles a pound. There is red caviar from the Chickoya, cold mutton, cold sturgeon, sardines, ham, and sliced sausages made at home. The latter must be abundantly and appreciatively sampled, because they have been specially prepared under the direction of the *souprouga* herself. One stands before the *zakuska* and dips from dish to dish. Next, the guests take the square wooden stools and draw up to the great table, where the plates are set for the real dinner. Each one helps himself to the smoking soup, which is

passed in the tureen. As this is being ladled, a plate of round balls comes by, the delicious *piroushki*, dough-shells filled with hashed meat, always served with soup. We have entered upon a typical Siberian meal, with the boiled soup-meat eaten as the second course, and madeira, champagne, claret, and rum, indiscriminately offered. A perfect babel of conversation goes on, and one is pressed to try this, try that, try each and everything of the long menu, under the watchful eyes of the kindly host and hostess.

At all times of the day the samovar is left simmering, ready for any one of the multitudinous household to brew tea, and constantly replenished *zakuska* dishes deck the sideboard. Guests, attendants, children, and friends come and go in the utmost freedom. Such is the *Hazan's* life.

In another part of the building there stuffs to repletion an army of dependents. Servants, artisans, drivers from the caravans which pass up from China by the road below the house, a whole other belowstairs world is here. Twenty caravan teamsters, *karetniki* or *isvoschniki* of the sledges and carts that fill the ample courtyard, huddle in the back rooms for tea. An old bespectacled maker of string-net doilies, who reads Alexander Pushkin's poems, is working out a week's board in the room where the chickens are kept. The housewife does not disdain, either, to find a place for the traveling *sapojnik*, who will put leather reinforcements on the felt





A CHICKOYA GIRL



TROI'ZKOSAVSK STUDENT





boots which have been worn through at the heel. It is a large easy way of living, this of the man who holds a leading place in the border city.

A mixture of crudeness and culture, of luxury and hardship, of Orient and Occident, runs through the quaint fabric of frontier society, with its medley of races and types. Fine avenues flanked by stuccoed houses pierce the main city. Back of them lie the log houses of the plainer citizens, while the outskirts are occupied by the felt huts of the Buriats and Mongols. Students in uniform elbow Cossacks of the Guard, and maidens from the seminary brush the Mongol wood-choppers.

"Téatre?" suggests one evening the twenty-year-old son of your host. Of course the invitation is accepted. At eight o'clock you put on your felt boots, and tramp down past dark-shuttered log houses and the silent white church into the field, where stands a barn-like building placarded with the programme. The young guide secures seats at the ticket-counter of rough lumber. Seventy-five kopecks they are, each. With them are handed out eight numbered slips of red paper. Then together you break a way to the front rows, through the crowd of burly Cossacks of the garrison, bearskin-capped students, citizens with shiny black boots, and here and there a husky stolid-faced Buriat. Keeping hat and coat on, as does every one else, we find seats on the rough benches wheresoever we like or can; for nothing is reserved save the elevated perch of the musicians,

where a four-piece orchestra drones out a monotonous Russian march. What a fire-trap! is the first thought. To each of the posts that sustain the rafters is fastened a lamp shedding an uncertain light on the hangings of bright-red cotton cloth, in dangerous proximity to which, utterly disregarding the "no smoking" signs, stand the crowd of forty-kopeck admissions, rolling and smoking perpetual *papirosi*.

As the impatient audience begins to pound and stamp, a bell rings, and the curtain rises on two comic characters busily engaged in packing for a hurried departure from their lodging. The stage has become a room, with red-cotton-covered walls and bright green curtains. A merchant comes with a bill for comestibles six months due. He is quieted with extravagant tales of forthcoming change for a hundred-thousand-rouble note. The landlady enters, and the shoemaker's apprentice with a pair of mended boots. Both are likewise cajoled and bullied away. The Jewish money-lender is more difficult, but at length, to the manifest delight of the audience, he, too, is staved off, and the pair draw the vivid green curtains and go out through a window for parts unknown, amid much glee and applause.

We now go out to the "buffet" and contribute to the dangers of conflagration by smoking an offered cigarette. We also add to the theatre's income by buying a glass of hot *chai* for ten kopecks. Something special is in the air for the next act. The audi-



ence is buzzing and moving in eager expectancy. We return to our seats. The curtain rises upon a double row of two-*pud* (sixty-four-pound) weights, such as are used at the bazaar to sell frozen beef. Amid a thunder of stampings on the plank floor one of the escaping debtors of the last act, dressed in tights, comes out from behind the green curtains, and lifts one of these above his head. Then he poises one with each hand. Finally a wooden harness is adjusted to his body, and sixteen weights (or about half a ton), are heaped upon him by the jack-booted Buriat stage-attendant on one side, and the defrauded merchant of the first play on the other. It is the most unspectacular performance possible, this athletic test, but it takes the place of a football match in Siberia. The applause is ferociously appreciative.

More *chai* and cigarettes, and we come back to hear a very pretty girl, dressed in the peasant's costume of Little Russia, head a chorus, and to see a boy in red blouse and boots dance the wild dervish whirl which the peasants of tradition are supposed to execute. The boy is in the midst of his performance when there is a tumult among the forty-kopeckers under the musicians' eyrie. The latter, being human, try to watch what is going on below and play jig-music at the same time, and sharps and flats fly wide of the mark till the sounds become frightful. Everybody jumps up on his bench to see a peasant having a turn with a Buriat, and further

trouble brewing with a Cossack who has got upset in the *mêlée*. There is a chaos of tossing hats and brandished fists, and the two armed soldiers who are on guard as policemen press in, with gruff shouts to make them way. The tumult finally goes out the door and into the street, and we turn back to the poor dancer still trying to beat out his stunt.

The curtain rises next on the manager, who has been up to date weight-lifter, escaping boarder, and part of the peasants' chorus. He is seated at a table, looking very ordinary in his street clothes. Behind him is another table covered with an assortment of crockery, mirrors, spoons, vases, pieces of cotton cloth, and a big striking clock. He calls for a volunteer from the audience for some unknown purpose, and a little rosy-cheeked uniformed Buriat school-boy, who has been peeking behind flapping curtain between the acts, responds. The boy reaches into a box and pulls out a slip of paper. The manager reads a number from it, "*Sto piatdeciet sem.*" An eager voice from the rear answers "*Jes !*" The stage-attendant takes a glass tumbler from the table and carries it solemnly to the man who has answered. Your host nudges until you comprehend that you are to excavate the eight theatre-slips, which you do, to find that two only are seat-tickets. The rest are numbered billets, and you are liable at any moment to receive a perfumery-bottle or a candlestick from the lottery which is in progress. The scene now takes on an imminent personal interest

shared with the banked forty-kopeckers behind. A breathless strain accompanies the drawing of the numbers. It mounts to a climax as the big musical clock is approached. The fateful billet is at last drawn in intense silence. Every eye is fixed on the reader. Not a Cossack speaks, not a Mongol moves.

"*Dvesti tri!*" and a sharp "*Moi!*" tells that the clock goes to ornament the table of a burly peasant, who grinningly receives it. The tense breaths are let out, the forms relax, and the crowd straggles to the door, lighting cigarettes and pulling down caps. The drama is over. Next morning at eight a soldier visits your host with a message from his chief.

"Bring to the police-station the passport of the stranger seen with you at the theatre last night."

A town droshky will take one the few versts to Kiahta, where in the Geographical Society's museum is the celebrated sketch of the Dalai Lama made at Urga by a Russian artist, when the young Tibetan monk had fled before the English expedition to Lhasa. Here, too, are ore samples and reconstructed Mongolian tents. But it is hard to look at fossil rhinoceros-heads and at stuffed sabre-toothed tigers and musk-deer when the camel-trains are passing and China is a verst away. A courier is necessary now, for resourceful Jacov and driver Ivan are strangers beyond the border. Perhaps our host knows of a man acquainted in Mongolia? He will inquire. Next day there presents himself a slight, bearded, intellectual man, Alexander Simeonovich



Koratkov, usually called, for short, "Alexsimevich." Bachelor of forty, educated in the Troitzkosavsk "Realistic" school. He speaks, as well as Russian, Mongolian, English, French, German, and some Chinese. He has translated for the English engineers who were brought in to work the Nerchinsk mines. He is deeply read in Buddhist mythology and sociology. Will he go down into Mongolia with you? Yes; and so it is arranged.

Provisions are cheap and abundant in the Siberian towns. Sixty kopecks buy a pound of caravan tea, seventeen kopecks a pound of sugar, the sort that comes in a cone like a Kalmuck hat. It is a luxury by warrant of public opinion, so much that it has, of note, been served on baked potatoes. Before the Buddha pictures of the Buriats, a few lumps may be the choicest offering. Flour costs six kopecks a pound. Beef, if a great pud-weight fore-quarter is bought at the market, twenty kopecks. Frozen butter will cost twenty-five kopecks per pound. Eggs, of the Siberian cold-storage variety, forty-eight kopecks a dozen. For thirty kopecks one gets a piece of milk as big as one's head. But do not try to go beyond the native produce, for canned goods, coffee, or sardines. It is bankruptcy speedier than buying bear-holes. A big magazine will sell *pâté de foie gras*, imported from France, at two roubles the tin; while beneath the Chinese caravansaries' arcade, bales of tea will be sold at a few kopecks a pound. One gets cigars in a glass-

covered box, with the government stamp, for a rouble and a half, and they will be worth about as much as the strings of twisted tobacco-rope which the Mongols carry off as their single cherished luxury.

And now for transportation. The sledge can serve no more, for the snow goes bare in places along the caravan trail. We must have a tarantass, and in time one is produced for inspection. A cask sawed in half, lengthwise, is the image of its body, a lumber-cart the model of its clumsy wheels and framework. To the tarantass is hitched the trotter, with his big bow yoke to bring the weight of collar and shafts on his back rather than against his neck. At each side of him, with much such a rig as is used to tow canal-boats, are made fast the two galloping horses.

When one goes beyond the post-route with his own equipage he has, fastened under the driver's seat and behind his own, bags of oats and hay, which must serve as emergency-rations for the horses against the days in which none can be secured along the often deserted trail. Personal provender must be likewise stored away, bags of bread, frozen dumplings to make soup with, tea, sugar, milk-chocolate, milk, candles, cheese, matches, kettles, and whatever else one can think of, or that the ingenuity of Alexsimevich can devise. Hay is piled into the tarantass bottom to supply the want of springs.

A driver who knows the trails has been found,

André Banchelski, a tall Siberian, of timbering and hunting antecedents, who has a small stock of Mongol idioms regarding the price of hay and the location of water. He has reached a very good understanding with Katrinka, one of the household dependents, and Nicolai is taking an interest in him.

To-night we go to sleep on Nicolai's plank couch, ready for the march of the next day. All is ready. To-morrow we cross the Chinese frontier.



## V

### IN TATAR TENTS

THE shaggy ponies, white with the frost of the morning, stand harnessed to the tarantass; André in his belted sheepskin *shuba*, whip in hand, is perched on the bag of oats; Alexsimevich sits in a greatcoat of deerskin, with only a nose and a triangle of black beard visible. The host, in his gray surtout, and the red-bloused drivers of the sledges scattered in the courtyard, all have left their samovars to see the start. The children of the family peep from behind the mother with her gray shawl-covered head. They group at one side, under the eaves of the doorway, while Josef, one of the household servants, swings back the ponderous gates. The reins are drawn in, the whip is lifted, the horses are leaning forward into their collars, when the cry of "André!" comes through the opening doorway.

From behind the gathered onlookers, who turn at the sound, runs out Katrinka, dressed in her best red frock. "André!" she cries. He pulls back the starting horses, and Katrinka lifts up to him a little bag embroidered with his initials in blue and red. "For your tobacco."

He looks down into her eyes and smiles. "*Spasiba*

*loubesnaia*," he says, and pushes it into the breast of his *shuba*.

"*De svidania, André!*" she whispers, then runs back, confused.

The teamsters laugh, pleased and amused as big children at her blushes, and her brother shouts a commentary from the gateway. "*Vperiod! vperiod!*" says the interpreter. He has reached forty now without falling before the charms of any Siberian girl, and he does not sympathize. "On! on!"

The horses swing out of the great gateway into the snowy streets, with "Good-bye! Good road!" called in chorus after us.

At a slow trot the lumbering carriage rolls through the quiet town, misty in the cold of the morning. The row of shuttered shops, with their crude pictures of the wares within, are opening for the day. The little park with the benches, which are trysting-places of summer evenings, cushioned now with six inches of snow, and the low log houses beyond, loom up and retire rearward, as we pass. The white church and the fenced cemetery of Troitzkosavsk are left behind, and we are on the broad paved road by which a sharp trot of half an hour brings us to Kiahta.

Its scattered houses now in turn begin. The big tea-compound, of four square white walls, flanks us and is gone. The officials' residences and the barracks of the garrison appear and vanish behind. The street opens out into a big square, where, shim-

mering against the white ground, stands the great church of *Voskresenie*, the Resurrection. On its green dome, lifted high in appeal and in promise, gleams the gilded cross. In white and green and gold Russia raises inspiringly the symbols of Slavonic faith before the doors of the heathen empire. As we pass the white Russian church, the litany of the popes and the answering chant of the choir come faintly wafted from within. But even as the Christians sing, the clash of distant cymbals and the roll of a far-off prayer-drum meet and mingle with the echoes. On the hill across the border, in vivid scarlet against the snow, with painted walls, sacred dragon-eaves, and flapping bannerets, flames a Chinese temple.

Here now is the borderland of empires. The neutral strip is in front, a hundred *sagenes* broad. The Cossack sentries stand at ease before their striped boxes, which face toward Mongolia. Far to the east and far to the west are seen stretching the long lines of posts marking the boundary. The outmost sentry, as the tarantass rolls across the strip, hails you with a last "*De svidania!*" (God speed!)

Past the Chinese boundary-post, covered with hieroglyphic placards and shaped like the lotus-bud, we drive, and in under the painted gateway of the gray-plastered wall. No Männlicher-armed Chinese regulars, like those that in Manchuria throng to hold what is lost, guard this half-forgot-



ten road. No sentry watches; no custom-officer bids the strangers stop. Through the open gate we ride into the narrow street of the trading city of the frontier — Maimachen, the unguarded back door to China.

In life one is granted some few great impressions. None is more striking than that experienced in passing beneath the shadow of this gabled gateway. Behind are kindred men, the manners of one's own kind, police, churches, droshkys, museums, theatres, the whole fabric of European civilization. From all these one is cut away in the moment of time taken in passing the neutral strip. Two hundred yards have thrust one into the antithesis of all western experience, into an utterly strange environment, where the most remarkable of the world's Asian races lives and trades, works and rules.

Everything which is made sensually manifest by sight, by sound, by scent, by action, is weirdly alien. You three in the tarantass are as men from Mars, isolated, and moving among people foreign to your every interest and experience. The solitary strangeness of your little party in the tarantass, started into a forbidding land, the first confronting vision of the eternal Orient — these are the things for which men travel.

As you go slowly down the narrow lane-like street, you catch glimpses of banner-decked courtyards seen through great barred doors in the gray mud walls. Here and there a sallow blue-coated

Chinaman, with skull-cap and queue, passes by, his folded hands tucked into his long sleeves, fur-lined against the cold. Chinese booths and shops are open. Waiting traders, seeing yet invisible, behind the many-paned paper windows, look outward through the peep-hole.

In the city square a halt is made before a Chinese store, for a last provisioning. At the entrance half a dozen Russian sledges are drawn up. Here can be had the supply of small silver coins indispensable for the road, canned goods of European origin, and a bottle whose contents may be less like medicine than is vodka. Though the goods come all the way from Peking on camel-back, they are much cheaper than the tax-burdened provisions over the border in Russia. Indeed many of the main Chinese stores, with their surprising stocks of wines and *pâtés de foie gras*, candies, and Philippine tobacco, are supported by Russian inhabitants of Kiahta and Troitzkosavsk. It is amusing to watch the enveloping of champagne-bottles in sleigh-robcs, and the secreting of cigars beneath fur caps for the return journey.

We stroll a little way down the street, among the Chinese booths for native wares, where sturdy shuba-robed Mongol tribesmen are bartering sheepskins for blue cotton cloth, metal trinkets, quaint long-stemmed metal pipes, and wool-shears with big handles. They are probably getting deeper in debt, as usual, to the wily traders. We pass the haymarket in the shade of a ruined temple, where

the Mongols have heaped their little bundles of provender.

All the while one has an eerie undefined sentiment that something is lacking. It is not that the houses which face the narrow main street are low and poor, that the gray mud-walled compounds are grimly unwelcoming with their closed iron-studded gates. It is not that the small stocks of goods in the shops tell of a vanished prosperity, now that the bulk of the tea-trade has left. It is not anything material, but an oppressive indefinable feeling that something is lacking. Only when Alexsimevich makes a chance remark, do you realize consciously what it was you instinctively felt, "It is queer to be in a city where there is not a woman or child."

Some have explained the exclusion law which controls the situation by the self-sufficiency of the Chinese, who wished no real settlement of their people here, — the fruit of a pride deep-rooted as that underlying the custom which brings every corpse back to China for burial. Others, by the desire to avoid transmitting to the Empire the diseases that are rife in Mongolia. Whatever the basis, the regulation is in full force to-day. At one time merchants in Maimachen kept their wives across the border in Russia, which under a subterfuge was not technically forbidden. But the ability to hide behind a technicality is a blessing enjoyed especially in democracies. It did not go with the chief of

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A WAYSIDE TEMPLE



police, who came down for a squeeze which made it more profitable to pay the women's fare home than to continue to offend.

Associating with the native Mongol women is here precluded by the fact that there are no settlements near by from which the Chinese might get indigenous consolation. A deserted tract lies behind the town. Only camel-drivers, wood-cutters, and sellers of cattle come into Maimachen, and they leave at night. For though the Mongols, in their pointed hats, pass along the streets, none may lawfully live within the stockaded walls, and none keep shop beneath the carved eaves of the houses which flank its narrow streets. This is the prerogative of Chinese traders from beyond the far-off Wall.

The spectacled merchant Tu-Shiti, who has become prosperous from the sale of Mongol wool, retakes for a visit, every two years, the long camel-trail to Kalgan and China. The tea-trader, Chan-tu-fou, drinks his wares alone. The slant-eyed clerks and booth-keepers trotting down the streets in their skull-caps, hands tucked up the sleeves of their blue jackets, plan no theatre-parties or amity balls, or sleigh-rides in the biting air, as over the way in Kiahta. The seller of sweetmeats will never be told to be sure and inclose the red and black New Year's card. There is no red-cheeked Chinese boy to smile as he munches your sugar; to puzzle over your ticking watch as at Kotoi, or to tease



the tame crane in the courtyard. Not a girl appears on the narrow streets. It is the sentence passed upon the generations of Chinese who have gone to Mongolia, that no woman of their race shall pass the Wall. And so it must remain, for never a home will be founded till China, the unchanging, shall change.

Back and forth through the thoroughfares go the little men with the queues flapping against their backs and their sallow uncommunicative faces. Are they thinking of the time when they will have made their little fortunes and can get back to China to enjoy them? As they wait for customers in the little booths, do they plan the homes which none of their blood may ever possess in Mongolia? When they sleep on their wooden platforms, do they dream of faces in the Kingdom of the Sun? Never will one know. Around the thoughts of the Chinaman arise the ramparts of his isolation. What he believes, what he hopes, what he dreams are not for you. The soul of China is behind the Wall.

The tarantass rolls out of the quaint weather-worn gateway of the woman-less city of Maimachen. "How much they miss!" says André, filling his pipe from the new pouch. "How much they escape!" retorts Alexsimevich.

When in hot haste Pharaoh ordered out his great war-chariot to pursue the rebellious Children of Israel, and thundered through his pyloned gateway with plunging horses urged by the shouts of

his Nubian charioteers, he must have experienced, despite contrasts, much the same physical sensations as those which we feel when the tarantass starts in full gallop across the level plain to the distant range of mountains; but where Pharaoh's robe was white with dust, ours is white with snow, and the sun, which baked his road, makes ours endurable.

The horses leap free under the knotted lash of the Siberian driver. With the rumble of low thunder the ponderous wooden wheels bound over the rutty road, hurling the springless tarantass into the air and from side to side. You brace yourself with baggage and hold to the sides, but toss despite all, like corn in a popper. The hay on which you sit shifts away to one side, leaving the bare boards to rub through clothes and packs. A sudden splinter makes you jump like a startled deer beside the way. In this noisy tarantass, down the narrow road grooved with the ruts of the Mongol carts and sledges that have gone northward, you tumble and groan and bump and roll out across the open country.

There is a wide plain from Maimachen. It climbs into the first barrier-range and the forest belt of Mongolia, whose plateau is the third terrace in the rise of land from the low frozen flats of the Northern Lena to the Roof of the World,—the Himalayas of the south. The northern city of Yakutsk is at a very low elevation, only a few feet above the sea.

Irkutsk on the fifty-second parallel is 1521 feet in altitude, Troitzkosavsk on the fifty-first is 2600, Urga on the forty-eighth 3770, Lhasa 11,000 feet.

Far to the northwest, Mongolia is a forested fur region; far to the south is Shama — the desert. Here at the north and east the forested belt of the Siberian highlands south of Baikal breaks off almost at the boundary.

Snow is over everything, but thinly. It has been worn away on the road, leaving brown patches over which the tarantass, mounting the long slope with horses at a slow trot, lugubriously thuds. A long stretch of straggly trees and stumps tells of Kiahta peasants going over the border to cut wood where no timber-laws limit. Up and up we go, the way steeper every *sagene*, — afoot now and the horses leaning and pulling at the traces. Finally silhouetted against the sky appears a rough pile of stones. At its top bannerets are waving from drooping poles. It is the Borisan on the summit of the pass to which every pious Mongol adds an offering, until the pile is many feet high, with stones, sticks, pieces of bread and bones. Some throw money which no one save a Chinaman will commit the sacrilege of touching; some give a Moscow paper-wrapped sweetmeat, some a child's worn hat or yellow-printed prayer-cloths waving on their sticks and fading in the wind; — everything is holy that is given to the gods.

A piercing wind, searching and paralyzing,



meets the tarantass beyond the crest at the southern border of the forest: it is Gobi's compliments to Baikal, the salute of the great desert to the great lake. The horses stumble through the drifted snow, scarcely able to walk. The driver, blinded, half-frozen, keeps to the general direction of the obliterated trail. Barely one verst an hour is made, until, under the shelter of the bald white range of hills, the road reappears and the wind is warded off.

A rolling plain between the heights is the next stretch of the way. The afternoon sun, dimly bright, creeps haloed through the lightly falling snow. Deep in the mist appears a dark moving mass. It grows, focuses, and takes shape into a shaggy beast of burden, and camel after camel emerges from the haze, loaded with square bales of tea.

"Ask if there is shelter near," you shout to the muffled head of the interpreter.

"I will ask," he replies. Then to the caravan leader: "*Sein oh!*" he cries in greeting.

The foremost camel stares stonily as its Mongol driver twitches the piece of wood which pierces its upper lip, and the whole train stops.

"*Gir orhum beine?*"

"*Ti, ti, orhum beine!*" comes the answer. "It is close at hand."

Forward the caravan slowly paces, each camel turning his head to stare as he passes out into the mist again. One of them has left a fleck of blood in each print of his broad spongy foot which the driver

will cobble with leather at the next halt. Along their trail you drive southward. The mist is clearing as you rise, and the sun shines down on the snow which has crystalized in little shafts an inch high. These spear-shaped slivers have a brightness and a sheen of extraordinary brilliance, and like prisms show all the colors of the rainbow. They cast a gleam, as might a mirror, a hundred yards away. It is as if upon the great white mantle had been thrown haphazard treasures in rubies and emeralds and diamonds and opals, — myriad evergrowing rivals of Dresden regalias. The sun goes down with its necromancy. Beyond, the soft blanket enfolds the rolling hills. It drapes the rocks and weaves its drooping festoons about the barren mountain-sides.

“Mongol *yurta*!” calls André, turning to point out with his whip the low dome-shaped hut, black against the darkening sky. On its unknown occupants we are to billet ourselves, sheltered by the rule of nomad hospitality. As the tarantass nears the wattled corral, the watchful ravens stir from their perches. The picketed camels turn to stare. A gaunt black hound stalks out, with mane erect and ominous growls.

“*Nohoi*,” cries out Alexsimevich, to the inhabitants of the hut; then adds to you, “Very bad dogs! It is a Mongol proverb: ‘If you are near a dog, you are near a bite.’”

Beneath an osier-built lean-to a woman is milking a sheep, with a lamb to encourage the flow.

She calls a guttural order to the dog, which slinks back. Then she comes to the wattled fence, while the sheep which has been getting milked escapes to a far corner of the yard. The woman's head is curiously framed by a triangular red hat, and silver hair-plates, which hold out like wings her black tresses. The shoulders of her magenta dress are padded up into epaulettes two inches high. She is girded with a sash.

"*Sein oh!*" says Alexsimevich.

"*Sein!*" she answers, and opens the gateway to the enclosure around the hut.

André drives in among the sheep and cows, and you climb lumberingly down with cold stiffened limbs. André puts his whip upon the felt roof, for it is a deadly breach of etiquette to bring it into the house.

"You go in," said Alexsimevich.

It is like entering a kennel, this struggle through the narrow aperture, muffled to the eyes in double furs and awkward felt boots. As you straighten up after the crawl through the entrance, a red glare from the fire just in front meets the gaze. Stinging smoke grips the throat; you choke in pain. It blinds the smarting eyes. You gasp and stagger. Then some one takes your hand and pulls you violently down on a low couch to the left, where in course of time breath and sight return. There is no chimney, nor stack for the fire of the brazier, which stands in the centre of the hut. One can see the open sky



through the three-foot hole above. The smoke, finding its way toward this aperture, works along the sloping wooden poles which form the framework of the felt-covered tent, filling the whole upper section with its blinding fumes. To stand is to smother. Sitting, the head comes below the smoke-line.

With recovered vision, one can look around within the hut. The couch of refuge, raised some six inches above the floor, is the bed by night, the sitting-place by day. Against the wall at the left hand, and directly opposite the door, is a box-like cupboard, along whose top are ranged pictures of grotesque Buddhist gods, before whom are little brass cups full of offerings, millet or oil, in which is standing a burning wick. Beside the door is a shelf loaded with fire-blackened pots and kettles. Branches of birch for fuel are thrown beneath. On the far side of the room, three black lambs, fenced off by a wicker barricade, are huddled together, quietly sleeping.

Seated beside the fire close by is the girl of nineteen who has just saved you from asphyxiation. The long fur-lined working-dress, common to all ages and sexes of Mongols, is buttoned on her left side with bright brass buttons, and is belted in with a sash. She has not the padded shoulder-humps, nor the spreading hair arrangement, which gave to her mother, who welcomed us, so weird an appearance.



A MONGOL BELLE AND HER YURTA



A ZABAIKALSKAIA BURIAT





Her complexion is swarthy like an Indian's, not the Chinese chalky yellow, and she has red cheeks and full red lips. Her eyes are large and black. The rest of the party have stayed a moment outside to ask about hay and water. You have made this solitary and awkward entrance. The girl has no more notion than a bird who the strange man of another nation may be, who has stumbled into her home. But it does not trouble her in the least. For a moment she looks you over calmly, with a smile of amused curiosity, rolling and wringing with her fingers a lambskin which she is softening. Then composedly she bids you the Mongol welcome, "*Sein oh!*" and holds out her hand. Her grip is as firm and frank as a Siberian's.

Now Alexsimevich comes tumbling through the door, and next André. Both are used to these huts, and artistically stoop below the smoke-line. All our impedimenta — blankets, furs, pots, kettles, bread-bag, rifles — are heaped in a mound within the space between the couch and the tethered lambs. The girl has not stirred from her work.

"They are friends of yours then, Alexsimevich?" you ask.

"No, no, I never saw them," he answers. "Any one may take shelter in any *yurta* in Mongolia."

A small head suddenly makes its appearance from the pile of rugs on the sofa opposite on the women's side of the tent. There emerges, naked save for a bronze square-holed Chinese *cash* fastened

around her neck, a little slant-eyed three-year-old. The water in the small cups offered to the *dokchits* has long been ice, and one has full need of one's inner fur coat and cap in the hut, where the entrance, opening with every visitor, sends a draft of air, forty degrees below zero, through from the door to the open hole which serves as chimney. And still this tot can step out naked and not even seem to feel it.

"The child's name?" asks Alexsimevich.

"Turunga," replies the girl.

"And your own?"

"Sibilina," she says, and smiles.

Turunga carefully inspects you, and solemnly accepts a lump of sugar which she knows what to do with, even if it is a rare luxury offered to gods. She sits down, in an evidently accustomed spot on the warm felt before the brazier, to play with the scissors-like fire-tongs, carefully putting back the red coals that have fallen out on the earthen platform.

The tarantass-driver, having piled up your impedimenta, excavates from its midst the bag of rye-bread, which he sets to thaw. He gets next the little bag of *pelmenes*, the meat-balls covered with dough-paste which you carry frozen hard. The mother comes in from under the *yurta's* flap, and, placing a blackened basin over the brazier, puts into it a little water and scours diligently with a bundle of birch-twigs. She brushes out this water

on the earthen floor near the entrance. This is the picketed lamb's especial territory, to which the felt rugs before the couches and the altar do not extend. A big bag of snow which she has brought from outside is opened and the chunks are piled into the basin, where, while one watches, it melts down into water.

"*Boutzela! boutzela!*" she cries soon, holding a lighted sliver over the basin to see by: "it boils." Into the Mongol's pot go our *pelmenes*, to brew for a few moments. An accidentally trenchant description of Siberian *pelmenes* was given on the quaintly-worded French bill of fare in the hotel at Irkutsk: "Meat hashed in bullets of dough." They come out, however, a combination of hot soup and dumplings, very welcome after the long cold day's drive across the plains, the frozen marsh, and the rolling hills. The wooden Chinese bowls from the bazaar at Troitzkosavsk are filled now with our hostess's big ladle, and the application of warmth inwardly gradually thaws the outlying regions of the body.

But there is trouble in camp. Turunga is moved by the peculiar passions of her sex and her age, curiosity and hunger. It does not matter in the least that she has home-made *pelmenes* every two or three days — she wants these particular meat-balls. The little mouth begins to pucker and the eyes to screw up. No amount of knee-riding by the mother takes the place of the *pelmenes*. We fill



a heaping ladleful and André furnishes his own bowl. The mother receives it, holding out both her hands cup-fashion as is the etiquette, and Turunga is satisfied.

The mother looks kindly to the stranger and smiles at André, then throws more sticks of the precious firewood on the embers. André has caught, likewise, the not unadmiring glance of the young maid. The girl who waits in Troitzkosavsk is not the only one who appreciates our six-foot Siberian hunter.

The dog barks in the yard, but without the menace which hailed us, and the crunch of a horse's hoofs sounds on the frozen ground outside. The flap opens, with its inrush of freezing air. Stooping, there enters a typical Mongol, squat of figure, round of head, with broad sunbrowned face and a short queue of black hair. He wears a funnel-shaped hat, magenta-colored, and is enveloped in a long *shuba*, with brass buttons down one side like a fencer's jacket. About his waist is a sash with jingling knives and pouches. He is the head of the family, come in from herding his horses. He turns back the long fur-lined cuffs which have protected his gloveless hands, and stretches out both his arms for you to place your hands over his. It is the man's ceremony of welcome. Then he produces a little porcelain snuff-bottle. This must be received in the palm of the right hand with a bow. It is to be utilized, and passed back. If the herder is out of snuff, the bottle is

offered just the same and you must appreciatively pretend to take a pinch. Such is etiquette.

The soup is gone now; the pot, cleaned out for the tea, is again on the boil and the leaves are thrown in. André has borrowed a hatchet from his host, and has chopped off a piece of milk, which goes in as well.

It is in order to ask the new arrival, Subadar Jay, to pass his wooden cup for some of the beverage. He takes it and the lumps of sugar without a word of thanks. The Mongol language has no expression to signify gratitude. Silence does not, however, mean that he does not appreciate. The dozen pieces of Mongol sandal-sole bread which he gives you later are worth two bricks of tea in open market, and this current medium of exchange — caravan-brought tea — is worth sixty kopecks the brick. No small gift, this bread, to an interloping stranger who is brewing tea by his fire, and camping unasked on his bed. A Tibet-schooled lama knows the Buddhist maxim, "Only accomplish good deed, ask no reward." But the unlettered Mongol layman knows its practice.

Little Turunga has played naked before the fire long enough now; she is caught up; her reluctant feet are put into the boots with pointed upturned toes, and her body into a miniature sheepskin "daily," such as her mother and father wear. The little girl is as smiling and shy and coquettish as any child of white skin and complex clothes.

"Will you sell Turunga for a brick of tea?"

"No, no," says the mother, gathering the little one quickly up into her arms, while the rest of the family smile at the offer and her solicitude. "No, no, not even for ten bricks!"

Everybody laughs, Turunga with the rest, in a child's instinctive knowledge that she is the centre of admiring attraction.

Far more petting than the Russian babies get is lavished on the little Mongols. Perhaps the much smaller families (only two or three children to a hut) allow more attention per capita. The mother hands Turunga over to her father, — unheard-of in Siberia, — and he plays with the child, giving her pieces of sheep's tail to eat from his mouth, answering her prattle or baby-talk and endless questions. At night, about eight o'clock, the mother takes the child to the couch and they both go to sleep, Turunga cuddled warmly under her mother's *shuba*.

Meanwhile we men sit cross-legged by the fire and talk of many things, — of the pasturage for the sheep, of the snow on the road, of the beauty of the housewife's silver headplates, of water and roads, of whether or not the Mongol *dokchits* on the altar are like the Gobi wolves that hate Chinese.

It is interesting to note how some of the words used (few, however) have a familiar sound — although there is said to be no common ancestry with the Indo-Germanic tongues; perhaps it is only the instinctive sound-imitation which makes the



Mongol baby cry "Mama" to its mother, as does the child in Chita and in Chicago. "Mine," for instance, is *mina*; "thine" is *tenei*. A horse or mare is *mari*. The word for "it is," "they are," is *beine*, a fairly respectable form of the verb "to be" in Chaucer's English.

The grammar is delightfully simple. In the vernacular there is no bothering about singular or plural. "One hut" is *niger gir*; "two huts," *hayur gir*. "Milk" is *su*, and apparently the word for "water" was formed from it — *ou su*. If one wants to know whether it is time to throw in the meat-balls he says, "*Ou su boutzela?*" with a rising inflection ("Water boils?") and the answer is, "*Boutzela.*" The "moon" and a "month" are *sara*, and the years go in cycles of twelve. If one wants to compliment the host on the excellence of the sandal-shaped bread which he hands out, loaded with gray chalky cheese (*hourut*), one says, "Bread good be" (*Boba sein beine*); this gives him great pleasure.

Some of the written numbers are somewhat like ours: 2 and 3 are nearly the same, but they have fallen forward on their faces; 6 has an extra tail. When the teapot overturns, they say "*Harlab!*" to relieve their feelings. There is no word for "so good," "farewell," or "much obliged." These are just squeezed into the heartiness of the final "good" (*sein*). So when one leaves, he holds out both arms, palms up, for the host to put his own upon, and says loudly, "*Sein oh!*"

A not unbarren amusement is to study out one's own derivations for some much-explained words. *Tamerlane* is often given as meaning "the lame." Why does it not rather come from *temur* (iron) and mean "man of iron," as the ruler of the Khalka tribe was called Altan Khan, the golden king? The Amur River has *khara-muren* (black water) usually given as its derivative root. Why not the Mongol word *amur*, which means simply "quiet"?

In the hut to-night, while we are comparing mother tongues, the brazier-fire has burned to red brands. The girl reaches into a basket beside the door for pieces of dried camel-dung, and puts them on, that the embers may be fed and live through the night. These *argols* do not smoke; she may close the chimney-hole with the flap of felt, and the hut will be kept somewhat warm through the night. The Mongols prepare for sleep: they take off their boots, and slip their arms from the sleeves of their fur *shubas*, in which they roll themselves up as we in our blankets. But how hardened they are to the cold! A naked arm will project and the robes become loose, but they do not wake.

We keep on all our inner clothing and roll ourselves about with skins until we are great cocoons. André gives a good-night look to his horses; then he, too, lies down. With our heads beside the altar of the gods, we sleep, in the Mongol's *gir*.

How cold it is in the morning when we wake! The embers have burned to a gray ash; the iciness

of the waste outside has gripped like an octopus the little hut, and sucked its precarious warmth through the night-long radiation. The chimney-hole is open again, and the mother is starting a blaze with her few pieces of birch firewood. André has gone out to harness the horses. He has left the door flap a little wrinkled, and the wind whirls through it and up the chimney, keen as a scimitar.

Alexsimevich is getting out the tea-bowls and the bread. You put a reluctant hand from under the blankets and seize your fur cap. Then you disengage the inner fur coat from its function of coverlet, and struggle, sleepy-eyed, into it. If you have the moral courage to take off these friends in need, and the inner coat and sweater, to get a bowlful of snow-water, and hunt among the baggage for soap and a towel, all at five o'clock in the morning of this freezing weather, then you have full license to call the Mongols dirty degraded heathen. If, however, you sit and shiver, and promise yourself that you will bathe at Urga, it is elementary fair play to be discreetly silent about the little failing of your hosts. You will rejoice, too, in open admiration of courage, when you find, as you sometimes will, a clean-shaven well-groomed lama, or a washed and combed village belle, on the road to the sacred city.

"Ready," says André. You finish a goodly portion of rye-bread and several bowls of Alexsimevich's tea, while he is carrying out the luggage and making a pyramid of it in the tarantass. You



put both hands out to shake those of Subadar Jay, of his wife, and Sibilina. You give a last chunk of sugar to little Turunga, and crawl out under the tent-flap. The family calls "good-bye" from the gateway as you climb in. Then up the hill you start, for the next day's ride.

It is slow to travel by this schedule. One can advance by day and rest by night, but daylight travel and night sleep, while most comfortable for a man, are the least efficient for a horse. If progress be the aim, one must adopt the teamster's system. This involves a start at midnight, and eight hours of travel at a slow trot, — six to seven versts per hour. Then, at eight in the morning, a halt for the ponies. One hour they stand in harness, before getting their quarter *pud* of hay; after which comes water, and finally, seven and one half *pfunde* of oats. Four hours of halt are involved, in which one can roll up in his blanket and sleep. Then off again for eight hours of trot, and another four hours of halt at eight in the evening. So the watches go, with some hundred versts made daily.

Noon to-day finds us climbing the hills on foot, to stretch our cramped limbs and ease the horses, as in old times the English tourists climbed the St. Gothard on the way to Italy. We are chilled, and racked by the jar of the road, and glad of even strenuous freedom. Presently we get on again, and ride down the far slope. It is the camel-boat of the steppe, this tarantass.

A solitary gnarled tree shows in the waste of snow — the one seed that lived, on the barren waste, of all that the Siberian winds had brought. An eagle is watching from its upper branches. Further on are higher hills, with trees growing on their northern declivities alone. No foliage can stand the sun, which steals the moisture and bakes the rocks on the southern slopes. As we pass one of these isolated groves, the bald trees are seen to be packed with old nests; for the birds from miles around come hither, as the only refuge for their eggs. Deer watch us, standing ten yards off; for these Mongols are poor hunters and their religion sanctifies life. A lama may not kill even a fly: it might be his own father, transmigrated into this form for insufficient piety. A big white hare starts through the trees, stops, and runs again. Thousands of little marmots scurry to their holes in the plain at the alarm of the tinkling bells. A kite soars with a marmot writhing in his claws. Big gray jack-rabbits bound along the road ahead. A troop of partridges let us pass their wallowed holes six feet away. They peer up, their heads protruding from the snow, their yellow aprons glistening like shields, tame as guinea-fowl. At length we drive into Zoulzacha village.

One becomes after a time somewhat of an adept regarding quarters. To-night the village gives a chance. The most promising exterior is selected, and driving up, we prepare to enter. Cold and cumbersomely muffled, you worm under the felt

hut-flap, and see through the pungent smoke of the brazier a dim figure seated to the left of a veiled altar. Bowed over a red-beaded rosary, he is chanting in a low voice, a weird oft-repeated phrase. He ceases as you struggle in, becomes silent, and looks up. "*Amur sein!*" he salutes in quiet greeting, and motions you to a place on the low sheepskin-covered couch, to the right of the altar, opposite him.

The open smile of his welcome shows white teeth hardened by the tough biscuit of his daily diet. You note next, with the pleasure born of seeing anything good of its kind, the light color and un-wrinkled features of this young man of twenty-five. The gaze of his brown eyes is direct and frank. He is clean-shaven, his hair is close-cropped, and he has the appearance of a well-groomed horse. In contrast with the smoke-blackened, hardship-wrinkled faces of the older Mongols, his is as a drink from a clear mountain spring after stale drafts from a long-carried canteen. His color is that of an athlete trained under the suns of the running-track. His features are defined, the nose not so flat, the eyes larger than the usual Mongol type. His expression is earnest and sincere as he now stands up in his robe of rich orange, trimmed and girdled with red.

He welcomes the guests without question, — it is the rule of Mongol hospitality, but you feel for the first time what an intrusion it is for your great



Russian tarantass-driver to shoulder his ponderous way into the home of a stranger, loaded with your bearskin rugs and rifles and bags of bread, and to pile them loutishly on the native's couch. At the other huts wherein you have lodged, this sentiment has not come so strongly. Poor places they were: the hardship-lined faces; the soiled and ragged robes of the women, the threadbareness of the heaped-up sheepskins on the couch, all these revealed that your two-headed eagle of silver was needed, and your coming a windfall. But here are no sheep fenced in, making one feel that standards are superfluous. The fuel is put away in a basket, the bright fire-irons are ranged in a row. The couch of polished wood is orderly, and the skin-rugs on it are folded in their places. The little chests of drawers are brightly polished, and the yellow cap, with its lining of fox-fur, on one of them is new and clean.

But most of all, in the proprietor himself is there an air of freshness and cleanliness, of youth and vigor, and of self-confidence. When you burst into a place like this, covered with snow and muffled up in furs, disturbing the master of the house at his prayers; when your driver lays the uninvited mattress down in the warmest place, a man cannot but feel like a thrice-dyed barbarian bounder, even if the home be a fifteen-foot felt hut open at the top, and situated on the borders of the Gobi Desert. So feeling, the first impulse is to let the host know that you are not quite, of intent, what you

are by accident, — a big hulking foreign savage. So you hastily think over what you can give to put yourself less at a disadvantage. The prized reserve of milk-chocolate comes to mind. "Will the host have some?" you ask.

"*Da blagodarion!*" he answers in Russian, to your surprise.

With mixed gladness at having made good thus far in any event, and regret at the diminished store of this commodity, you take a little spoonful of the snuff which the host is now offering in a beautiful porcelain bottle, patterned in flowers. Then you come back with a cigarette. Most of these people know what cigarettes are, though some smoke them with their noses.

"No, thanks!" and he points to his closely-cropped head.

Alexsimevich, who has followed into the hut, explains: "You speak to a priest, he does not smoke."

A screen hangs before the altar opposite the door. You look hesitatingly at it. Without demur, the lama, at the visible interest, draws back the veil. There, in painted grotesqueness, is Janesron, the red god of Thunder, and bearer of the lightning sword. He glares down with his three eyes upon the sunken orbits of a sheep's head, laid out as an offering. Black Gumbo, the six-armed good spirit, is also there, and both are surrounded by attendant demons. All are pictured artistically, the minute detail of Tibetan workmanship showing in

their squat bodies. The polished wood of the frames is as finely wrought as a Japanese sword-hilt.

On the box-top, beneath the gods, are set out in neat array the best of Mongol dainties. These are disposed in little polished brazen cups shaped like wine-glasses. There are raisins and dried plums, caravan-carried from the far-off Middle Kingdom, and lumps of sugar brought down from Russia in some trader's pack. Millet fills one cup, water another; each symbolizing some ancient seizin. A wick, sunk in oil, flares in the centre, and casts a flickering, uncanny light upon the deities. Spread on a low seat, six inches above the felt rug on the floor, are rows after rows of *boba*, the gray Mongol biscuits, in shape like the thick soles of a sandal. As a centre-piece between the stacked loaves rests the brown roasted sheep's head. It is the feast of the New Year that this unusual volume of offerings betokens. The old year of the Horse passes with the rise of to-night's new moon. The leap-year — that of the Ram — will then begin. All the families in the *eimucks* of Mongolia will feast on the grosser part of the offering which now lies in its ranked regularity undisturbed. For the present the priest takes light refreshments while waiting for his midnight rite.

"Will you have some of the tea that has been brewed for you by the old mother while you were looking at the altar?" asks Alexsimevich.

It has been made, not from the loosely-packed



leaves, but from the hard tea-bricks. A chunk of this has been cast into the great iron bowl over the brazier when the fagot-fed fire has melted the ice and has brought the water to a boil.

Solemnly you are presented a wooden bowl of tea, which you receive in both hands, and as solemnly sip. The evening meal is cooked and eaten, your sugar reciprocating the lama's tea.

As the evening wears on, amid the smoke of cigarettes and brass-bowled pipes, the lama brings out quaint paper slips of Buddhist prayers.

"You are interested?" He will write for you a charm. "*O mani padmihom*," he tells you. "The Buddhist prayer."

"Oh, thou jewel in the lotus-flower, hail!" says the interpreter.

It is mighty, this ancient Buddhist prayer, which is murmured by so many millions from Japan to Persia, from Malay to Siberia. It is symbolic, esoterically, of much. The jewel is the soul, the lotus is Buddha, the prayer, a wish that the spirit be in them which was in *Saka-muni*, their Lord. On endless rosaries this prayer is told. It is on the lips of priests and women, it is carved around the stones which travelers throw upon the *obos*, the "high-places" of Old-Testament record. It is murmured by the pilgrims as they prostrate themselves. The disciplined body, the praying tongue, and the mind intent on sacred things, all incline the soul to the acquirement of merit.

The lama draws now with his quick hand, trained to the Tibetan script of the Urga monastery-school, sketches of his temple, *Zoulzacha Soumé*, of his people's summer tent of cloth, and winter hut of felt. He writes out the Mongol numerals, and explains the cycles of years, in answer to questions regarding the New-Year festival. He describes the puzzling element-and-animal system, by which the *chère mari*, or earth horse, is 1907, the *chère khoni*, or earth ram, is 1908, and so on through a sixty-year epoch.

He quotes Mongol proverbs come down from old priests and rulers: "One may buy slaves, but not brothers," and, in the spirit of Macchiavelli, "You can govern a State by truth as well as you can catch a hare with an ox-cart."

Now it is nearing moonrise. From his rolled purse the priest draws a small slip of paper ruled into a half-inch checker pattern, in every square of which there is a symbolic group of letters. The lama consults this. Then he brings from the chest beneath the altar a long narrow box in which are strips of faded paper thick as parchment. On these in red and black are traced quaint characters, written, as is our script, from left to right. The priest selects a dozen of his long sheets and puts them carefully on his couch. He touches the box to his forehead and restores it to its place. Then he turns and speaks to the interpreter.

"The lama must make ready for the night of the

New Year," you are told; and as you look, off comes the red sash and yellow robe. The young priest stands up in his vivid blue jacket and walks to the entrance of the *gir*. From a cupboard he takes a towel, and from the fireplace, ashes. Pouring warm tea into a wooden bowl, he scrubs hands and face with the vigor of an athlete after a run. Then back to the cupboard he goes, and off comes the blue jacket for a clean new silken one. A rich yellow robe is donned. A bright silver knife is slung upon a new red sash which girdles his waist; and smart and erect as an officer of the Guards, the lama steps over, prostrates himself before his deities, then goes out into the night to his temple service.

"Creeds are many, but God is one," murmurs Alexsimevich.

It is regrettable that the rule of lama celibacy prevents the arrangement of the usual kidnapping marriage-ceremony between this young priest of Zoulzacha, and Amagallan (blissfulness), the belle of the Odjick encampment. It is early in the first moon, Sara, of the year of the Ram, and holiday still reigns in Mongolia. Doubtless she, too, is a sooty Cinderella at other times; but to-day she is a reigning princess, dressed in the best that a father, owner of a hundred sheep, can furnish. A bright new blue coat, lined with fine white lamb's-wool, is belted around her rather ample waist with a red sash. Her boots are of evident newness. But the triumph, the chef d'œuvre, is her pointed red hat



made of the brightest Chinese silk. It is topped with a gold and black knot and is garnished with gold braid. The flaps, turned up at the sides and the back, are of a long silky dark-gray fur. A broad red ribbon fastened behind is brought forward and rests on her breast. She has a feminine eye to its brilliant contrast against the blue dress. Two long tassels of pearls, set in coral-studded silver earrings, frame a rosy, laughing face; for Amagallan is exhilarated with the consciousness of being very well-dressed.

The presence of two young herdsmen in dark red and blue, and one lama of the first degree, — and consequently not estopped from the race, like a full-fledged priest, — bears testimony to the effectiveness of the costume and the girl. The wiles with which she distributes a smile to one, a dried Chinese plum to another, and a mild frown to a third, reveal even more the universal woman. Amagallan is not at all averse to adding to her string three masculine Russians. There are only two foreign nations in Mongolia, Chinese and Russians. Into the latter class come all stray visitants — Americans, Buriats, and Troitzkosavsk teamsters. The girl stands up now and greets this American with a frank handshake. She invites him to sit down with the rest. Since there is scriptural permission to eat meat offered to idols, the fact that the evening's feast has stood at the feet of Buddha need not deter one from partaking of the little dumplings, gray cheese, and

dried fruits. Amagallan hands them out on one of those sole-shaped biscuits, which serve as plates until one has eaten what is on them, after which they go down themselves. A fat sheep's-tail is sliced for your benefit, while a coarse lump of dusky-looking sugar is an ultimate delicacy, eaten as candy. Muddy brick tea follows, of course. The Mongol bread is good, but it takes resolution to do one's duty by the gray cheese, the resin-like desiccated milk, and the sheep-fat just seethed.

A chatter of conversation goes on, the neighbors drift in and out, and those of our *gir*, as the evening wears on, make excursions to the other huts and exhibit and drink more muddy tea for politeness' sake. The hostess in each tent shakes your hand before feeding you. The formality makes you temporarily one of the tribe and family, to be treated with courtesy and hospitality. Thus you are taken into the social life of a simple affectionate people.

We meet in one hut a traveling friar who has tramped sturdily from Tibet, pack on back and prayer-beads on arm, begging, praying, selling relics claiming to cure rheumatism, and the eye-diseases which the smoky huts induce. He carries on a pole an image of Gumbo and others of the *dokchits*, together with a hodge-podge collection of rosaries, strips of silk, bells, beads, pipe-picks, etc. These are jingled during parts of his prayer, where it is necessary to keep the god attentive.

In one hut they are playing the age-old game of



A MONGOL "BLACK MAN"





*tawarya*. A bag is produced containing hundreds of sheep's-knuckles, colored blue. Everybody gets a handful. Then a girl holds out her fistful of them, and each man guesses the number. There is a rapid fire of shouted numerals, — "*niger, hayur, urbu, durbu!*" The one who guesses correctly gets the handful of knuckles. This person next holds out his fistful, and so it goes. It is an uproarious sport, interspersed with quite unnecessary grabbings of disputed handfuls, — part of the game that Amagallan is playing, even if not germane to *tawarya*.

Finally through the darkness you make your way back to the *gir* in which you are billeted. The wreathing smoke from its dome is illuminated to-night by the beams from the fire below. It rises in dimly bright convolutions, beautiful in its small way as the great Northern Lights. You spread your felt on the floor of the tent and roll up in your rugs. The teamster needs a timepiece to regulate his hour of harnessing, for you must start at daybreak. Leave your watch for him on the altar of the *dok-chits*. It will be safe in this hut by the desert of Gobi, among the remnant of the Golden Horde.

The days' marches have taken us well up among the ridges of the Kentei Mountains. To the eastward is the peak which, despite the claims of Urga's Holy Mountain and of a site near Tibet, has the best authority for being the burying-place of Genghis Khan.

In 1227 the great conqueror died. The confused records tell of his body's being taken northward to a mountain which was the heart of his empire, from whose slopes sprang the sources of the three great Mongol rivers, — the Tola, the Onon, and the Kerulon. Beside its sacred lake the Manchu Amban of Urga sacrifices annually to the Nature-spirits. It is both a survival and a memorial to the bloody sacrifice of every living being on the road to the grave, — a tribute which tradition says the guards of Genghis Khan's funeral cortège offered to their departed chief.

Huts are far apart in these highlands now, and the whistling winds pierce the very marrow. The tired horses can hardly crawl forward on the doubtful trail. Far up in the heights, beside an old caravan-route, superseded by a newly-cut artery of travel, we come very late upon an ancient wooden shrine.

The worshipers have gone. They lived their time in a village near by, but with the exhaustion of pasturage for the flocks, under nomad necessity they moved. A new camel-road was tramped out by drivers, who must find shelter amid habitations. So in the shrine, long unpainted, the smiling Buddha presides now over his famished altar.

Very, very old, very, very poor, is Archir the warden, who welcomes you. For forty years he has watched in his *gir* by the dragon-gargoyled gate. The spear with which he stood to his post of old is blackened, and its red tassel is dulled and faded.



A tattered fringe is along the edge of the felt door to his *yurta*, and holes are under its walls close to the ground. His pile of wood is pitifully small, and few are his sandal-sole biscuits. His *shuba*, sheepskin-lined, is blackened with the soot of years.

Archir refuses courteously what he knows is a rare foreign delicacy, a Russian cigarette. "A lama," he says, "may not smoke." But his own hospitality is of the thoughtful kind which comes from the heart. He hands you a sheepskin softened by long massaging between his trembling old hands, that his own covering, not your coat, be burned by the sparks from the brazier. He notices that your tea-bowl is awkwardly held, and he brings a little table to put before you. He sees your driver fumbling for a match to light his pipe, and reaches him a coal with the fire-tongs. He clears his couch that you may sit in comfort. He offers you the first use of his fire for cooking.

In the old days many came to pray to the smiling Buddha. The drivers of the tea-caravans from far-off China left their offerings of fruit and silk scarves. The herdsmen whose lambs had lived well through a bitter winter gave sheep fat of tail to the two yellow-robed priests who chanted and clashed the cymbals through the long days and into the nights. The little boys dedicated to the gods, shaven-headed, rosy-faced, crooned their lessons in the Tibetan tongue, sitting on the floor of the big blue school-*gir* beside the shrine. Every day pilgrims

on their way to Urga stopped to pray in the *soumé*, and filled the tent of the young guardian with eatings of noodle-soup and drinkings of tea, with gossip and with song.

But all is changed now in his little hut. The rule of non-marriage he keeps in the spirit, where so many lamas observe it only in the morganatic letter. This has left him alone in his old age, and pitifully solitary now that even the dwindling camel-trains, of whose tea-traffic the Manchurian Railway has robbed them, pass by no more. The priest is unfed even by pilgrims. These have gone with the rest to the routes of a better prosperity.

Archir has seethed his evening meal of sheep-meat and flat pieces of dough. He has let the fire die down to embers, and has pulled the covering over the round hole. The freezing winds very soon make his hut so cold that one feels like a thin shaking uncovered creature even beneath the heaped furs. One's ungloved hands grow numb as he lies by the brazier.

In the morning we too depart, and like the Roman legionary beside the Vesuvian gate of Pompeii, the old priest waits, alone, unquestioning, uncomplaining, till a greater God than he of the *soumé* shall send the summons of relief.

The mountain-ranges, one after another, stretch their towering barriers across the path. They trend northeast and southwest, as in Siberia. First comes

the Sharan Daba, the white range, whose pass leads down to the Iro River, rich in alluvial gold. The streams flow westward into the Cellinga, whose waters empty into Lake Baikal, and thence by the Angara River, into the far-off Arctic Ocean.

Ridge follows ridge now, and valley follows valley, — narrow cuts, with shallow streams, and huts clustered upon their sides. Out from the almost deserted borderland, the Mongol encampments are not unfrequently pitched where there is water for the flocks. If any wood be near by, it is well, since then the dried dung can be reserved for the smokeless evening fire when the top hole is closed.

When the steep mountain climb has been passed, it is as if a gateway had been opened through the constricting ridges. The broad valley of the Hara-gol stretches out. Down, down, we go, onto a plain, in the centre of which we come to an enclosure with a high mud wall and a peaked gateway, gaudily decked with red banners and vivid placards. Outside the mud walls of the compound, far and wide, are checker-board squares with irrigation ditches between. Huge stacks of hay and straw are piled up near the gate, the wonder and envy of the nomads, who never have more than the scantiest store. Within are booths facing the courtyard. A little temple occupies one corner. Two-wheeled carts are drawn up along the wall. Troughs and picket-poles are ranged in line, ready for the caravans.



Now, around the tarantass, there gather from their threshing the dwellers of the compound, — coolies from the far-off Pink Kingdom, with puffy blue trousers and tight-buttoned jackets, flail in hand and metal pipe in mouth. They stare stolidly without comment at the frost-covered horses, the robes, and the bearded strangers. Expressionless they stand watching every movement. Alexsimevich asks a question; no one answers. We sit for a moment mutually expectant. Not one of the Chinese stirs or speaks.

Then André swings down and leads the team through the gateway into the compound. Alexsimevich leads the search for shelter. We cross the courtyard to the building which serves for the lodging of travelers. Its walls are of mud, and a big adobe chimney projects up one side. Beneath low eaves a small window with white paper panes blinks like the sightless eyes of a blind man. We stoop, pushing open the crudely pivoted door, enter the smoky chamber, and the door swings back behind.

We are standing in what seems an unreal world — a stage-scene or a cavern from the Arabian Nights. In front and on each side close in dark windowless walls. Behind comes a feeble light from the little paper-paned window. In the dimness, a flickering fire throws fitful gleams on dusky figures, idols, and wearing-gear hung on pegs driven into the wall.

As your eyes become accustomed to the gloom, the details take shape. A clay stove is to the left. Fagots are heaped beside it, copper kettles rest upon its top, pigtailed figures are crouching around. In front, a platform, raised four feet above the clay floor, occupies the whole width of the room and extends back into the darkness. A group of men are seated, cross-legged, around a little brazier, smoking. Others are lying rolled in blankets.

With our luggage André staggers in. No one stirs. Some of the group around the stove turn their heads to look, but that is all. André heaps the food-bag and blankets in a vacant spot on the *kang*. We make room on the stove for our pots to boil the water for tea. On this self-elbowed place amid the rest we sit cross-legged, propped against the clay wall. The smoke from the oven, led under the *kang*, warms it so that the outer coat can come off. A little tabouret some six inches high stands in a corner, and serves as a table for the repast.

The shelter is far better, as comforts go, than any of the Mongol tents. The icy wind that sweeps the latter is barred off. There is a stove to replace the nomad's brazier; a warm *kang* instead of the floor to rest upon. But how different is the spirit of the hosts! There are no frank hand-clasps here, no interested gossip and inquiries of the adventures by the way. No generous bringing out of fat sheep's-tails and snuff-bottles for the guests' delectation. You cannot but have the feeling that these people

are as indifferent to your existence as they are to the pariah dog that howls outside the walls. They are exclusive, non-welcoming, — these Chinese. They are strangers to the land, self-sufficing in their toilsomely cultivated rye- and wheat-fields, an isolated, womanless, working settlement.

Despite the better quarters and comfort which these inns afford, one prefers to go to a Mongol tent and be among men more human, if less civilized. When the bread is thawed and the tea is boiled, we eat, pay the Chinaman who gave the wood, and with a sense of relief go out again to the tarantass and the road.

For versts now the way is along the alluvial plain, seamed with irrigation-ditches and dominated by several of these walled Chinese factories. As the sun goes down, however, there appears a solitary building, and André gives a glad shout, seeing that it is built of wood and has windows and big centre chimney. "*Russky dom!*" he cries.

A low mud wall surrounds the enclosure. Inside some quilts are hung in the air, that the cold may kill the vermin. A big black dog comes up, but unlike the scavenger beasts of the Mongol encampments, it signals welcome with friendly tail-waggings and good-natured barks, approaching at once as if accustomed to kindly treatment.

The quilted door of the house opens. A booted figure appears with the familiar red blouse, and the Russian greeting hails you, "*Zdravstvuitie!*"



"An Orthodox Buriat," says Alexsimevich.

We mount his wooden steps, shake his hand, and enter the big warm room.

It is as if one were back in Siberia. The Buriat's Siberian wife, in shawl and kerchief, is busy at the whitewashed oven. Brilliantly-colored comic prints detail the misadventures of the young recruit, with doggerel ballad rhymes beneath. Chickens peck beneath the stove, the samovar hums on the table, and figures sipping tea are grouped around it on the benches, or are lying on the floor enjoying the genial warmth.

"Hail, Alexsimevich!" comes a voice; and a tall bearded Siberian, dressed in a Mongol robe, rises.

"Aha, Vladimir Vassilivich!" answers our interpreter. "Good-day!"

A volley of questions at once overwhelms him. The party has been long away from Kiahta, and we have the latest news.

"A Kiahta merchant, my friend, and his son," Alexsimevich explains.

Overcoats are being doffed, mufflers unwound, and boots kicked off. The babble of talk continues. A place is made for us at the table, and glasses of tea, with immense slices of cheese and ham, are placed before us. When more tea and cigarettes have completed the repast, Alexsimevich paces up and down, relating with dramatic gestures the latest gossip from Troitzkosavsk.

In the midst of his narrative, which all are follow-

ing with great interest, there comes an incident of heightened vividness.

"Sh—sh!" a warning signal sounds. One of the auditors points to a shape rolled in blankets, and lying on the bench.

"*Gaspaja*" (a lady), they say.

Alexsimevich completes his tale in a lower tone and with more artistic circumlocution.

But it is the other side's turn to tell a tale, for why, in the ferocious cold of midwinter, with — save for this one Buriat's house — the Mongol huts only for nightly shelter, why does a lady come down here?

The merchant explains: "She has twisted her knee-joint, and in Irkutsk, in Tomsk even, the Christian doctors cannot heal her. A lama tells us that warm sulphur-water will soften the sinews, and the bone can be brought back into place. We go to the warm springs of the Holy River. I have been there in old times, and I know the way."

With pathetic eagerness the party has gone to do the lama's bidding, and bathe in the Mongol Jordan. Evening comes. The lady's bench is pulled over close to the oven. The merchant and his son lie down beside it on the floor. Servants and drivers roll up at their feet, and all sleep, in amity.

It takes resolution to awake at daybreak and leave the luxury of this shelter. But when horses are harnessed, riders must ride. The rising sun comes up over the white plain. The Buriat waves

"good-bye" from his doorstep; the dog barks in farewell, and we lumber on southward.

A sugar-loaf hill marks the end of the valley. We turn up now into the mountains, the driver somewhat in doubt as to the way. A boy of about fifteen years, a yellow-robed lama novice, rides by. Alexsimevich hails him to ask the road to Urga. A complicated explanation follows, hardly understood.

"I show you," says the boy.

For a dozen versts he rides along on his pony beside us, chattering and laughing. When, after a devious trail, the pass is in sight, he starts off, and will not, at first, accept any present for his trouble.

Valley follows valley now, the trail fairly well defined. Mongol huts give a chance for rest and for cooking. A welcome is bidden us in each, the nearest water is shown, and invitations to come back are freely extended.

There is now one last range to cross, the Toloytou, highest and steepest of all. Even the mounted Mongols, who have caught up with our toiling tarantass, swing off and climb afoot. Trees are on either hand, and the white wall-like face of the barrier passed in the morning seems a bare verst away. There comes a whole slope of boulders and rocks, jagged and broken, like the moraine of a glacier. And then, at long last, we reach the high-heaped Borisan at the summit, with its fluttering prayer-flags. The foremost Mongol throws on a



rock, leaps upon his pony, and rides twice around the mound.

"*Argila ! argila !*" (bridles free ! bridles free !) he cries, and trots down behind the crest.

We, too, throw on a stone, and take the steep descent.

Beyond the low rolling ridges below is the white of the Holy Mountain, topped with green foliage. Here one may not kill the thronging hare and deer and pheasants. As we gallop down, the *obos*, the white memorial monuments, take shape from the snow. In the dark-gray dimness of the city beyond, green and gold roofs become distinct, lighted by the last glow of the sinking sun. Huts cluster close now along the road, and the shadows of innumerable dogs pass and mingle and pass again, where the gray mud walls and houses begin to be continuous. In the dim twilight the tarantass thunders into the great wide way which ends in the main street of Urga.

Two hundred feet broad is this street. Mud walls twenty feet high flank it. The gates to the enclosures are closed. The fast-fading light discloses hardly any passers-by. Save for a distant tom-tom there is deep silence brooding over the city. A great empty square is entered, where a few figures are passing in the distance. We approach one of these, who upon our question lurches up to the tarantass. He is a Russian clad in Mongol *shuba*, rather the worse for liquor.

"I will show you," he says amiably.

Affectionately leading the horses, he reels down one dark alley, then down the next, until we come to a second broad street and to an enclosure with a lantern-lighted gate. A cry brings at length a stir within. The gate swings open.

"The *Varlakoff* house!" says the guide thickly.

The tarantass is led in, and we stumble through the darkness into a Russian home of some pretensions. In the main room is a lamp and a table covered with a red cloth. A glass of tea is available and is quickly swallowed. Then, tired out, we roll up in our blankets, on the floor, and drop off to our first night's sleep in Urga, the Holy City of Mongolia.

## VI

### THE CITY OF THE REBORN GOD

**T**HE murmur of many voices pierces the blanket over your head. Sleepy-eyed in the warmth, you peer out from the chrysalis of coverings to watch the people moving about. Alexsimevich has extricated himself from the mound which he constructs nightly on the floor, out of luggage-bags, felt mats, rugs, and overcoats. Under all the heaped wrappings that he uses in the icy Mongol tents, he has camped and slept close up against the white wall of the oven. Truly the Siberian is brother to the salamander. He pulls on now his big felt boots and runs a pocket-comb through his beard.

The wife of our host, come to the door for a survey, notes progress and returns to the female region. The Hazan Varlakoff, gray-bloused and wearing deerskin boots, enters next. He lights his first cigarette; his wife with the bowl of sugar and the plate of bread follows. She has gotten up earlier than her husband, so she is several cigarettes ahead, but he is cutting down the lead.

Perhaps one had better get up one's self. It is an easy operation here. "Getting up" consists in emerging from the rolled blankets and stretching. "Dressing" means pulling on boots. One can wash



over in the corner, where the brass can lets out a trickling stream of cold water when the needle-valve underneath is pushed up.

The samovar hums on the red cotton cloth of the table. Varlakoff moves along to make room. From the little pot of infused tea your glass is partly filled; then you place it under the spigot for hot water, and the beverage is ready for sipping. No lemons are here, as in Russia. In a few Chinese shops one can buy spherical citrons, but they are like unripe oranges, and are a luxury as great as pineapples in old New York.

A wool-buyer from Kiahta reaches for the bowl of broken loaf-sugar, and holds it for you to choose the piece whose size pleases best. The housewife comes from the kitchen over by her oven-door, bringing some crestfallen cake which she has made in your honor.

"*Kuchete ! kuchete !*" she commands, arms akimbo, puffing contentedly on her cigarette.

We revel in the luxuries of Varlakoff's room; warmth such that we may take off the cumbersome outer coats; chairs to sit upon, instead of crouching cross-legged; hot samovar-made drinks, and a chance to wash in water. The latter is a privilege which can be appreciated only after a period of ablutions in lukewarm tea. We stretch out and bask and sip, and whiff *papirosi* in epicurean idleness.

As we luxuriate, one by one the neighbors of the

Russian colony come in, to hear the news of Kiahta from Alexsimevich. The expedition has become part of the gossip-transportation system. Half the population of Kiahta must have sent messages here, — half the Russian traders in Urga have come to receive them. First, there is the general news dispensed into the expectant ears of the group at Varlakoff's. Alexsimevich is for an hour the cynosure. Questions and answers flash back and forth, going off sometimes explosively like fireworks. Then follow the special events and the individual messages. At last these are all detailed. Now come invitations from various men to visit their houses "Will the *gaspadine* come?" — "The *gaspadine* must see the city." — "*Da ! da !*" echoes the group.

Varlakoff goes out for his stick and overcoat. The wool-merchant gets into his fleece-lined *shuba*. He achieves the feat by the usual Siberian method. Putting the garment over his head, he pushes his arms through the sleeves, and gradually struggles and writhes up into it as one gets into a wet bathing-suit. Alexsimevich finishes his fourth glass of tea, lights one of the *Hazan's* cigarettes, and worms his way also into his deerskin greatcoat. Then out we go into the bright sunlight and the snow-covered streets.

The houses of the Russian quarter of Urga were only glimpsed in the dusk of last night. We have daylight upon them now. Squat whitewashed buildings they are, with neatly paned windows and big



TEMPLE OF GIGIN, URGA





square chimneys. Across the mounds and hillocks of a broad street is the one-storied Russian Club, where one may drink vodka, play billiards or cards, and while away the winter evenings. Further on is a row of shops. The bearded owners stand behind their counters, dressed in belted Mongol *shubas* and Russian fur caps. The doors to all the shops are open, that the Mongols, perplexed with knobs, may not take their trade elsewhere. Enameled kettles are hanging in festoons down the walls. The shelves are crowded with bolts of vivid-colored cotton cloths to be sewed into *shubas* by the Mongols who ride in to buy. There are big cases of sweetmeats, Mos-cowski caramels, acceptable offerings to the grotesque *dokchits* on the family shrines. Russian monopoly tobacco is there, in stamped paper packets for the delectation of Muscovites and Buriats who have the taste and the means, and villainous South-China tobacco and snuff for native purchasers. One can get vodka almost as bad as that of Siberia, and far cheaper, for it is compounded by a local distiller who rejoices in an exciseless market. Foreign brandies and wines fill big walls of shelves.

"*Zdravstvovitie!*" one of the merchants calls, hailing our party.

"It is Vassili Michaeloff, old friend of mine," says Alexsimevich. "Let us go in."

We enter and are led back into the private part of the house.

"*Chai !*" shouts the host to somebody behind the oven.

"*Haracho,*" comes the answer.

We all sit down. If any purchasers drift into the shop, they can wait until we get through our visit, or they can go down the line. For wherever the Eagles are planted, the Russian joyfully drops his business to entertain a friend. At the call of "tea" the shovel goes into the ditch, the ledger onto the shelf, the pen into the potato. If "*chai*" interferes with business, cut out business. Nor does it matter in the least that we have just had breakfast; by the rule of etiquette we must be entertained. "Tea" consists first in a ceremoniously clinked toast drowned in vodka. Then appears the samovar in charge of the woman of the house, the glasses, and the sugar. Next follow the cigarettes. The talk is animated, for its local history absorbs each little world. The fact comes out that the cousin of Michaeloff has bought a new pair of horses for a hundred roubles. The price, the quality of the animals and of the man, all go into the crucible. Kiahta beer arrives as the conversation turns to the death of one Ivan Vladimiraef, which it is agreed was not unnatural, since he had reached the age of ninety-odd years. Still the provisions come. The good wife brings in a heaping plate of lard-impregnated Hamburger steaks, called "*cotlet,*" which Alexsimevich attacks as if his last meal were half a day instead of half an hour distant. Other



bottles accumulate to help out the dwindling flagon of vodka. We enter upon Château Yquem, Pomeranian, and Caucasian claret. Then cakes are set out, and more tea, and finally a quart bottle of champagne.

Alexsimevich stands to his guns like the 38th Siberians at Tien-tsin. But it is hard for any one of less rigorous training in this sort of thing to hold even the straggler's pace at nine o'clock in the morning. Mentally we hoist the flag upside down, and wink at Alexsimevich as the outward and visible sign of the inward and spirituous distress. He takes the rest of the champagne in a last gulp, and with a series of thanks we gain the entrance to the shop, where two Mongols and a Buriat are waiting patiently, looking vacantly around at the crockery.

We are shown ceremoniously to the door, shake hands, remark about the weather, give our compliments to the wife, and depart. When at the corner, we glance back. Vassili Michaeloff is still standing on the threshold; his three customers too are looking out leisurely at the people passing.

"We have thrown his business out of gear," we remark to Alexsimevich.

He seems surprised.

"There is plenty of time. Why should they mind waiting? *Nietchevo*."

Another host is overjoyed to see us, for an engineering problem of great perplexity is, he tells us in

due course, harassing his mind. No one in Urga can help him out, but perhaps we will.

"The Chinese governor, the *Zinzin*, wants to make an automobile line from Kalgan," the host announces. "I saw an iron bridge once, so I agreed to build him one over the Lara River. Have you ever seen an iron bridge? How shall I do it?"

You allow that you have seen an iron bridge, — that you have even gone across one. You suggest that much depends on the river. "How wide is it, for instance?"

"I have not picked out the place for the bridge yet," answers the host; "but the river is somewhere between sixty and three hundred feet wide. Have some vodka?"

"And how deep is the water?" you ask.

"Well," — after much thought, — "it is deep in the middle and shallow at the edges. Have a cigarette! Have some tea! If we build this bridge, the *Zinzin* will give us a decoration. How much will the bridge cost?"

"That depends upon what sort of bridge you build, and how long it is, and how much material you use!"

Alexsimevich comes in.

"You see, the more iron you use, the more the bridge costs," he observes.

"*Navierno! navierno!* you speak sagely, Alexsimevich. That is what I told the *Zinzin*."

"It must have piers and abutments," you venture.

"But the *Zinzin* does not like piers, because the water was not made to put such things into. Yet I said with you, one must always have piers. Here is brandy. Take a few sardines!"

The problem certainly needs something special for its elucidation. You ponder, and Alexsimevich and the host breathlessly watch the hatching of your official pronunciamiento.

At last you deliver yourself.

"Find out how wide and deep the river is. Then write to a steel-manufacturing company, to quote prices. They will send a blue-print of an automobile bridge of the specified length, together with the weight of the steel. You can buy pieces to build it at so many kopecks a pound, just like butter."

"Ah, my friend, you do not know how great a service you have rendered! What a providence is your coming! Pray, have some cognac! Will they send me a picture with piers, — a picture that I can show the *Zinzin*?"

"Yes, — yes, indeed."

"I go to-morrow to tell him of this."

We are once more in the street and the banded escort is turning into still another Russian's house. Their idea of sightseeing is apparently to take tea with every Russian in the place. A mild desire is registered to come in contact with some of the other



people. The idea strikes them in the light of a strange new doctrine.

"You wish to see Mongols?" one asks. Though surprised, they acquiesce amiably. "To-day they have holiday; you are favored. Go see the doings and make me visit later," says the disappointed third host.

Then the wool-merchant speaks.

"Near by is the great temple of Urga, which few have seen, for it is one of the most holy places of the Lama faith. It is the temple of Maidari, the Future God. If the *gaspadine* wishes to see it, I, who have bought wool from the uncle of the keeper of the gate, can gain admittance."

For this we start. The Russian section, made up of shops with posters and signs in Slavonic letters, and homes with centre chimneys and little square panes of glass, is left behind. Through a long dark lane we come out into the main thoroughfare of Mongol Urga. The town is in festival for the New Moon. The streets are ablaze with color. Red posters are on every door and wall. The brilliant picture is framed by the snowy girding hills and the green trees of the Holy Mountain to the south. The tomb-like altars on the plain are dazzlingly white against the gray-plastered fronts of the houses behind. The gilded gargoyles of the temples flash in the sun. Down the main street, a hundred feet broad, go bevvies of girls, their hair bedecked with the gaudiest ornaments of silver and



TEMPLE IN THE URGU LAMASERY





pearl, their silken robes striped and banded in green alternating with yellow and blue and gold. Lamas stride here and there dressed in bright orange robes and hats, their silver knives hanging at their sides. Great shaggy-haired dromedaries swing past. Horsemen, robed in vivid scarlet and blue and magenta, dash at full gallop across the wide open *piazza* in the centre of the town. A donkey-cart is driven slowly along, crowded with brightly-dressed girls. A squad of Chinese cavalry trot by in white jackets, red-lettered. Two of the Cossack garrison swagger past. A bearded Siberian trader strolls across, clothed in the dark Mongolian cloak which most have adopted, going toward the Russian quarter we have just left. A string of oxen plods by, drawing cartloads of wood.

Walking on, we come to a long line of kiosks which a continuous procession of pilgrims in holiday attire is entering. In each booth is a cask-shaped prayer-wheel, a magnified model of those which women carry, twirling them in their hands as they walk.

Along this main square of Urga, and girding her city stockade, are hundreds of these cylinders. All the day long, men and women are going in and out from one kiosk to another, turning. Some say that formerly one could enter a great Tibetan temple only after saying a prayer so long that even a Grand Lama's memory could not carry it. So, for convenience, a cylinder with the written text was set

up at the temple gate. By degrees it became the custom, without reading it, to rotate the petition for a blessing. Others say that the wheels are whirled in literal obedience to Buddha's precept to "turn over and over his words."

Alternating with the wheels are stone shrines graven with Tibetan characters, before which, on wooden couches, silken-dressed women are abasing themselves in abject worship. A long line of pilgrims is doing the circle of the city. They stand, then drop prostrate in the snow. Rising, they move conscientiously forward to where their heads touched, and again lie prone, making thus a penitential circuit of the stockade. Most are in deadly earnest. Some, hired for a proxy service, steal forward a few inches on each prostration.

Suddenly three distant guns boom out.

"*Scurry, scurry toda!*" says the wool-merchant. "Quick, this way. He is coming."

You hurry forward to where a trail leads across the square. Afar off, in the direction of the Holy Mountain, is seen a band of galloping cavalry. The Mongols on horseback around you are drawing rein. The pilgrims are looking toward the approaching cavalcade. Brilliant red and yellow are the robes that flutter as the body-guard ride. Now a rumble of wheels is heard among the clattering hoofs. Preceded by twenty horsemen, followed by twenty more, rolls down a Russian droshky, with a yellow-robed lama driving. Propped among the multi-

colored cushions sits a clean-shaven, silk-robed man, with puffy cheeks and tired eyes. The European watch which he carries hangs in anomalous awkwardness at the breast of his robe; his leg is propped on the front seat, as if he were lame. Most turn their backs to him in Oriental honoring; many prostrate themselves in the snow; every horseman in the square has dismounted.

"He drives from his palace beside the Holy Mountain to the temple on the hill beyond the city," says the wool-merchant.

"But who is it?" we ask, as the last galloper rides by.

The Russian looks at us as an old Roman might, if in the Forum we had not recognized Cæsar.

"That! That's Gigin, the Living God! That's Buddha come back to earth, — Gigin!"

You stand a moment to take it all in. Then, despite your purpose of respect, a smile works to the front.

At once the wool-merchant laughs gleefully. "Ask Varlakoff about the Buddha," he chuckles. "Varlakoff sold him his ponies for ten thousand roubles. My friend showed him a picture of the ponies, little horses, you know, and Gigin told him to get them. They had to send to an island of Europe, Scotland. But Gigin was very pleased. He said Varlakoff was the only man who had never lied to him."

The expression of the wool-merchant was that



worn according to tradition by the Roman augurs.

"When there is not a holiday, the people have the market here in this square," the merchant continues. "I was here in the bazaar with a friend last week, and we heard a commotion over by that prayer-wheel. We went up, to find that two of the Buddha's lamas were borrowing a fine horse, worth three hundred roubles, which belonged to a Mongol woman. It was all she had, she told us, and it was being taken to the Living God's stables. The woman was in great distress.

"It is mine. I will appeal to the Consul," said my friend.

"The Gigin's men could not take a Russian's horse, so they had to give it up. The Mongol woman came and wept on him, she was so glad. She brought a gift to my friend. Generally the Gigin returns such borrowed booty when he has used it a while, but often not. Anything that is new, the God will buy. These pilgrims, you see, bring him offerings. Kalmuks come all the way from the Volga, Manchus make pilgrimages, Buriats come down from north of Baikal, and tribesmen from Tibet. He has half a million roubles a year from his priests, and he does not care for anybody."

Becoming more and more steeped in celestial gossip, we go past the gray-plastered compounds piled high with wood and timber, a main export of Urga. Tall masts with logs suspended from

them are the signs. We reach at last a big stockaded courtyard, the beginning of the monastery quarters.

"Come, look in here!" says the guide.

You peer through the gateway at six of the biggest bronze *burgoo*-kettles that ever existed outside an ogre's kitchen. Each kettle can hold a couple of cows.

"It is to feed the monks," says your companion.

The Mongols are going up to the vessels, with buckets suspended to the end of a milkmaid's yoke. They dip up a load. The soup looks like gray tapioca pudding. What it is made of remains one of the secrets of the monastery, whose chef is stirring the mixture with an oar.

A big stockade, enclosing tents and peaked *soumé*, from which the sound of chattering is heard, appears ahead. As we approach, a whole hive of boys swarm out and scatter in all directions. Some are in red, some in yellow, some wear ordinary Mongol caps, some wear high, yellow sugar-loaf fools'-caps, which fall over on one side. These are the novices in training for the lama hierarchy.

The first-born of each family must by immemorial custom become a lama. In babyhood and boyhood one of these dedicated children is clad in yellow robes and is especially tended. "*Ubashi*," he is called. When about ten years old the boy goes to school, at Urga. He becomes a *bandi*, or student of the prayers and of the Tibetan language. He runs

about as those we have just seen, and at about twenty he becomes a *gitzul*, or first-degree lama. Now he shaves head and beard, and wears a brilliant yellow and red robe. Next he takes the more advanced examination and catechism, and becomes a full priest, or *gilun*, forbidden to marry, to kill, or to work. He may continue his curriculum in one of the departments of the lamasery, studying divinity, medicine, or astrology.

In the divinity course a lama will memorize Tibetan prayers, and pore for years over the big holy books which lie within the chests of the lamasery chapels. He will repeat the creed over his beads, in rapt self-hypnotism, meditating in celestial holiness. He will pray down rain for the grass, and will exorcise glanders from the ponies.

A priest taking the medical course will gain a knowledge of the innumerable herbs that grow on the Tibetan mountains, many of which are of great value as drugs, and are known only to these monastic seekers. Massage, warm sulphur baths, and waters, are part of his pharmacopœia. Mixed with genuine instruction in anatomy and medicine, he will be taught the incantations that cast out *tchut-gours*, or evil spirits, the words of power to be written on rice-paper and rolled into a pill for the patient to swallow. He will learn what devil is responsible for the disease which has brought low the lusty herdsman, and the right order of image to make for allaying the infernal anger. He will be taught





A PROSTRATING PILGRIMAGE



when the fever crisis is at hand, so that the cymbal-clashers, the drum-beaters, and the prayer-wailers may assemble, and by these holy noises and a transcendental counter-excitement, lift the patient over the fever-point.

If he elects astrology, he will be instructed in casting horoscopes of unfailing value, in reading the stars, predicting their future stations and the coming of eclipses. He will be prepared to declare the reasons for visitations of murrain and to track the trail of straying camels.

Divers are the paths of knowledge, but all may lead to the honor of Grand Lama, head of a monastery, or member of the college of *shabniars*, who form the Council of the Living God. And when the great reaper has called the high priest from his earthly glory, a whitened tomb will be raised to his memory just outside some town along the camel-trail, while his ashes will be moulded into briquettes and godly images, to rest before the gods in the shrine of some *soumé*.

We have arrived at the gateway to the great temple. The wool-merchant disappears inside to work his pull. A young lama comes out to the door, smiles at the foreigner, and then goes in again, and you tremble lest your advent is being announced to some other than the one man who can supposedly be "fixed." This is the most important temple of Urga, forbidden to foreigners, and seen through good fortune by a few only of the old residents.



But every gate they bar to hate will open wide to love — and a ten-rouble note. The merchant comes back.

“We can go in while the lamas pray,” he whispers.

The uncle appears, with an expectant look on his face, and motions us in through the darkness to the anteroom of the temple sanctuary.

From the chamber curtained off at one side comes a low swelling chant.

“Service begins, you may see it from here,” the lama says, just above his breath.

Your station is in darkness, but just the other side of the curtain are the lamas, and their apartment is lighted by windows. Two rows of benches extend the length of their chamber, leaving an aisle between them, reaching from the door to the altar. A score of priests in yellow robes, with red sashes slung tartan-fashion over a shoulder, are sitting on these seats facing each other. They are ranged evidently in the order of their ages. Two old *giluns*, fluent in the Tibetan litany, sit next the altar. Then come younger lamas, the *gitzul*, not yet full priests. Finally next to the door are *bandi*, ten or twelve years old, intense in youthful delight that their part in the ceremony is to pound as lustily as they can the big prayer-drums. The service begins with the chanting of a ritual in form not unlike the Slavonic litanies of Siberia. At appointed times it is necessary to call the god's attention to the fact that

something is going on in his honor. At once a most deafening clamor begins. The small boy with a drum is drowned out by his big brother, further up the line, who officiates upon a huge wooden cornet, and by his uncle with the conch-shell or the cymbals. The droning of prayers is like the buzz of hiving bees. There seem to be no responses, but all of them read together. Presently comes a sudden clamor, almost like a fire-alarm; then the crash and the droning suddenly cease.

"It is over!" says the guide.

The lamas file out by a further door, and we tiptoe in to inspect the holy of holies at the heart of the great lama sanctuary. In the dimness one sees first before him the table for offerings, on which are the two main sacerdotal instruments, — a silver bell and a silver handle like a carving-knife-rest, — and row after row of targets made of dough-paste, of brass cups filled with oil to serve the tapers, of millet, rice, currants. Behind this altar, towering far up into the hollow of the dome, is the bronze colossus of the smiling Buddha, Maidari, the Future God.

Fifty feet in height, the figure is, cross-legged, with open, painted eyes. From Buddha's hands hang long silken streamers. One of very fine quality is embroidered with the ten thousand gods.

"This," the priest whispers, "is a present from the Dalai Lama."

A great festival takes place in summer in honor of this god, who will rule a myriad years hence, when

the race of giants descends to kill mankind and to people the earth with their own kindred. The Gigin's elephant is brought out, and he himself takes the lesser dignity of a carriage in deference to Maidari. Even the gods of the present must honor the gods of the future.

The Gigin's throne is to the left of the statue. It has triple silk cushions. Around are twelve colossi of Buddha, some ten feet in height, and entirely gilt save for the red lips and the eyes. The hands are held in differing positions, folded, outstretched, pointing. Here and there a silk scroll is hung.

The walls of the sanctuary are lined with shelves like a book-store, and these are loaded with statuettes of the ten thousand gods.

We tiptoe back the way we came, and are soon in the street of the monastery. The uncle has seen us safely away. We betake our route from the Mongol toward the Russian section.

"You saw the throne cushion of Dalai Lama?" the wool-merchant asks. "They have put it back now. Gigin kicked it out of the temple when Dalai Lama left. The Angleski drove Dalai Lama from Lhasa, and he came to Urga to visit Gigin, because here is the second great Buddhist holy place. Now Dalai Lama is very monkish, very austere, and always prays and fasts. But our Gigin" — here follows another expansive smile — "Gigin rode out with his Council, the *shabniars*, and took some



of Pokrin's best champagne in the cart, for they would not have it in Lhasa. Dalai Lama was very stiff. Gigin asked him, 'Have a drink!' Dalai did not understand, for drink is forbidden. Then he asked him again, and Dalai Lama refused rebukingly. They came to Gigin's palace at the foot of the Holy Mountain, which is built like the Russian consulate. After the prostrations, Gigin said to Dalai that he had come far and few women were on the road and those mostly old and ugly. Dalai Lama refused that too. Cigarettes and snuff, and canned tomatoes he offered, but Dalai Lama refused them all. Then, in the Assembly of the Lamas, Dalai rebuked Gigin, and made him sit below his servants in penalty, for Dalai Lama is more of a god than Gigin. All the pilgrims came to offer gifts to Dalai Lama, and Gigin did not get his. For months Dalai Lama stayed here. Afterwards he went away to China. Gigin came to this temple then and kicked Dalai Lama's throne, throwing it down. He celebrated in the summer palace when Dalai Lama left, for he was very happy."

Mongol Urga is left behind, and we reënter the Russian town. A hail from one of the passers-by is not long delayed. "Will you have *chai*?" he questions. He is an alert-looking Russian, smartly clad in a *shuba* of green leather trimmed with sable.

"Must we eat any more dinners to-day?" we inquire.

"Only tea," is the reply. It is not quite reassuring.

"That is Pokrin, the one that sells to the Gigin," the wool-merchant whispers. "Go with him : he can tell you some tales."

Obviously one must not miss the acquaintance-ship of this modern Ganymede, cup-bearer of the many-bubbled French nectar and jugged ambrosia ; so on we march to his compound.

Pokrin was on his way to a business appointment ; but no rendezvous will interfere with prospective *chai*. He hangs his coat back on its peg, bids his wife start up the samovar, and produces the vodka-bottle. Yes, his family is very well, and he is very busy buying hides. We talk up and down and roundabout numberless themes, and at last venture : "The Gigin !"

"Ah, the Gigin was here to see me only a week ago."

We bow our recognition of the host's great importance, and he is started ; soon he buckles down into the story.

"The Buddha came up in his carriage with his lamas riding beside him, and they tied their horses all around here in front. Then Gigin came in, walking softly because of his gout, and he said, 'Let us drink together like friends, without quarreling.'

"I brought out the drinks, and we sat down, — Gigin and I with the lamas around us. Gigin likes best the strong drinks, — not vodka, but cognac and sweet champagne. Very many bottles we drank,

Gigin and I. And at last I fell asleep. But Gigin drank still. Then he too fell asleep. In the morning the lamas carried him to his carriage, and back he drove to the palace, with the people lying down in the street as he passed. All the next day I had a very bad pain in my forehead, and it felt large."

By non-Siberian standards Alexsimevich should be on the way to similar symptoms in the near future. For the purveyor to the Divinity has produced an assorted collection of his wares which are being sampled with due diligence. Cold meats and wheat-bread appear on the table with the samovar.

"We must eat, or he feels badly," whispers Alexsimevich, as he makes a sandwich, an inch and a half through, which is about the depth of brandy in the Siberian highball.

Other neighbors drift in as the afternoon wears on. The talk turns to that greatest of local events, the Metropolitan Handicap of Mongolia, under the high patronage of the Living God. Things become decidedly stimulating, and the recitals lively. Everybody is living over the excitement, ejaculating and gesticulating. The child-quality in their minds keeps so vivid their impressions, that the scenes are projected almost as by a cinematograph.

From hundreds of miles around, the herdsmen have assembled. The plain before the city is a riot of color, as the horsemen ride here and there. In the centre of the field is the gay pavilion for the



yellow-robed bishops and cardinals from distant lamaseries, guests of the great Gigin.

All through the morning, hundreds of riders and horses have been making for the starting-point, twenty *li* (about seven miles) distant. The jockeys are the smallest boys available: young red-cheeked lamas, perched bareback on the shaggy racing-ponies. The monks, who are stewards of the course, have with much shouting finally, at the hour, lined them up in a long row, facing Urga. One thousand ponies have been reported as entering. It is a regiment of boys. A signal starts the whole cavalcade together. The thousand small jockeys shout at once. A thousand whips come down on flanks. Two thousand heels dig into the ponies' withers. Over the irregular plain tear the racers, dodging around gullies, stumbling in marmot-holes, galloping helter-skelter amid furious yells. At length they come within sight of Urga. Crowds, mounted, have gone out to follow them in. The shouts redouble, the people become frantic; the riders yell at one another, and the horses are as wild as their masters.

*Shabniars* and cardinals get to their feet as the cavalcade appears. The Living God's heavy eyes brighten up with interest. His chief soul-mate waves a jewelled hand and chatters excitedly with a lama of the guard. The foremost rider is close at hand now, the jockey, wriggling like an eel and almost on the neck of his pony, yelling and slashing. The field thunders behind. The leader nears the

pavilion, his pony is on the fierce final spurt, — a last cut of the whip, and in triumph, amid the deafening roar of the populace, the winner passes the line. Many other riders come in at his heels, but most straggle off to either side of the course when they see that the finish is lost. The victor is caught up by the priests and is brought before Gigin, where he lies on his stomach in adoration. He receives a gift, and is pensioned for life. The horse's owner receives a good price for the animal, which is added to the Gigin's stable. The mule-cart of the Buddha is then brought up and he is loaded in. The yellow bishops mount their steeds, and back to his palace goes the Living God. Thus ends the great Uрга race.

There are other athletic tournaments during the season; most important of these is the championship wrestling-bout, which every year decides whether laymen or clergy are the better sportsmen. The Gigin's pavilion fronts a ring, with dressing-tents on either side. From one emerges a layman. He advances by huge jumps and prostrates himself before the deity. Next, palms on the ground, like a great frog, he leaps into the ring. The chosen lama executes the same pass from the other side. They meet, jumping like game-cocks, with quick breaks. At length the clergyman gets a leg. In an instant he heaves up on it, and over goes the black man, — out! The whole assembled populace raises a stupendous howl. Bout succeeds bout, with differing champions and varying issues. Partisanship is in-

tense. The clergy usually win in these matches, and have long held the championship.

One guest tells to-night of the photographer who bribed a lama, and got the first photograph of Gigin. The tale runs that this man, a Russian, secured admission among a crowd of pilgrims, and snapped the god, unawares, among his entourage of priests. This photograph, enlarged and colored, is the one now hawked to the Mongols, and which they set up for worship among their other gods. The lama was beheaded, they say. That was several years ago, however: since then Gigin has been photographed at the races and elsewhere.

At last we break away from the group and return to our lodgings at Varlakoff's.

We are informed next day that among the invitations so lightly and uncomprehendingly accepted was one to take dinner with the mayor of the Russian settlement. We are expected therefore toward evening. So, late in the day, we gird on our greatcoat and move out heavily. Down the street we fare forth to the house of the host. A fine well-fed man is this mayor, with the cordial grip and the slow smile of good-fellowship. He wears a very long beard. He has taken a fancy to the embroidered green and pink Chinese ear-tabs as a substitute for the big fur cap of his own people. The ear-tabs are about as appropriate to his burgo-master build as baby-blue ribbon on the tail of a fighting bull-pup. Otherwise, deerskin boots and





A GRAND LAMA



hunting-coat, he is the real Siberian. In the mayor's large sitting-room, along the wall against which the table stands, is a rank of bottles of divers heights and fatness, like recruits out for their drill. The samovar of shining brass leads the array. Four different-sized glasses stand at each plate, and the intervening area is covered with platters of sausages, cheese, bread, sprats of every conceivable variety, and a medley of cold *zakuska* dishes.

The mayor reaches for the vodka.

"Please, none!" we blurt out.

The mayor looks hurt. Then an idea takes form in his head, and he shouts something to his Chinese boy, who promptly shuffles through the door into the street.

Out of the window we catch a glimpse of him turning into the establishment across the way, where Pokrin's clerk sells the wherewithal to make a Russian holiday. The Chinese boy emerges with a bottle, and trots back across the street with the curious gait made requisite by the unattached thick-soled slippers. He shuffles into the dining-room and makes space for one more bottle. Whiskey! The mayor has bethought himself of the English label, and has sent for it, on the theory that not to drink, like not to sleep, is unbelievable.

Evidently one must again sidestep, so *chai* is besought and got down. Our virtue is rewarded, for the host smiles and is content.

"Poor Pokrin!" he says presently, reminded of



the man by the beverage. "He made over a hundred thousand roubles from selling things to the Gigin. But now he can't think of any more things to sell. You saw the Gigin's new droshky? But that is n't like selling an elephant or an electric-light plant. Pokrin is down to pelicans and fountain-pens."

He shakes his head sympathetically, and reaches anew for the vodka-bottle. He goes on reminiscing, half-cynically, half-regretfully, of the past, while dinner to serve the appetite of a Cyclops keeps coming on.

In the midst of the repast cries arise outside. A Mongol with a flow of language is heard calling aloud for "*Bulun Darga!*" (fat policeman.)

"They are after me," says the mayor resignedly.

The Mongol comes hurtling in, pushing past the Chinese boy.

"Fat policeman," he cries; "Red Mustache and Long Nose and Blue Coat are drunk, and are disturbing my *gir*. Come quickly, O Lord, fat policeman."

The mayor sighs. "I go"; then he turns to us. "Will you accompany me?"

"Gladly, if we don't have to eat any more."

The mayor considers this a back-handed compliment to the amplitude of his hospitality and smiles.

"*Vperiod*, it is not far."

He puts on his huge greatcoat, draws on his pon-

derous boots, takes a heavy stick, and in vividly embroidered Chinese ear-tabs stands ready to follow the Mongol. We shoulder open the felted door. From the low-ceilinged recess between this and the outer door he produces two other big sticks, like pilgrim's staves. These he hands to his visitors.

"For the dogs!" he explains.

The Mongol's hut is soon reached. It is in frightful disorder, and vodka-bottles are strewn around. The mayor looks up in a little book to see if Krasni, young Agueff, and Pugachev are not, as he suspects, the men who in native nomenclature are called Red Mustache, Blue Coat, and Long Nose. He finds that he has rightly surmised.

"I know them," says the mayor. "They will come around to me in the morning. I will tell them to make the Mongol satisfaction. When they come back and say he is satisfied, I tell them to be good and to do this no more. *Nietchevo!*"

The irate man is jollied along, and is told that it will be fixed up soon. Consoled and soothed by the protection of authority, he admits it was not so bad after all, and he bids us, as we leave, a grinning "*Sein oh!*"

"Now," says the mayor, "will you not come and see Urga at night?"

He leads along an icy back street, black as a canyon, with the bulging mud-plastered walls, twenty feet in height, so close that a cart can barely pass between them. Not a light is seen save as a ray

pierces the shuttered planking of some compound door. Distant clanging of cymbals and far-off echoes alone break the stillness. Out from the gloom of the street we come into the open *piazza*, half a verstwide. It is unshadowed, and less dark. Threading the heaped-up refuse we stumble on. The black crows, with lancet-like blood-red beaks, which search the heaps by day, are gone. The black cannibal dogs wake and growl as we approach.

"They are afraid of a stick and don't generally attack people. But, if several do come at you, crouch down and stay perfectly quiet," the mayor counsels.

He then tells of the Cossack who last year, passing by a dog that did not move aside, drew his sabre and struck the beast. As soon as the other dogs smelled the fresh blood, they became mad, and half a dozen came at him. He put his back against the wall and slashed among them. Many he cut and wounded, but more came and more, in an instant. Soon he was pulled down, for hundreds were upon him.

A big black-furred brute looks insolently at us as we pass.

"They do not bury the dead here, you know," the mayor says. "The corpses are taken to the mountain northward outside the town, and are left. It is cold to-night. There will be death in the market-place where the poor lie shelterless. And the dogs wait beside them."

A little way off, where the prayer-wheel stands,



is the twinkling light of a shrine. The new moon and the few brilliant stars are frigidly distant. They cast a pale white glow now on the dimly outlined walls and huts. A beggar, lying unseen, calls suddenly as we pass his heap of sodden hides. The six-foot Siberian hunter by our side cries out as he stumbles over and beholds a something, partly eaten, guarded by a great cannibal dog.

If the thought of the rights of man has drowned sympathy with all that concerns the government of Russia, visit Urga at night, and the Cossack of the Russian Guard, swaggering along among the Chinamen, — this Cossack whom you have heard execrated as the “knout of the Czar,” — will look to you like a Highlander at Lucknow. The chance to absorb an unwholesome amount of tannin by way of a samovar, and to sleep on the floor beside the oven in the whitewashed house of Michael Varlakoff, will become a privilege more prized than any possessed by His Holiness, the Living God.

The section of the Russian colony in which we have been lodging consists of five hundred-odd traders. They have drifted down from Siberia, and on the free ground of taxless Urga have established their shops of gaudy European cloths, enameled cooking-utensils, candles, and cutlery. These Russians, whose whitewashed many-paned houses fill a quarter of the town, have not the large interests watched by the English merchants, who dot the globe with their agencies. They are small Trans-

Baikal shopkeepers, transplanted bodily. They build their houses in the Siberian way, and their wives toil personally at the oven. They wear blouses and felt boots as the house-dress, and keep the ikons in the corner. Prosperity is evidenced in the striking-clocks, the lamps, nickeled samovars, and curtained double windows. But they are still not many removes from the peasant.

There is, however, another section of Urga's Russian colony, grouped around the consulate, a large compound situated a verst east of the Mongol town, which was built in 1863, and was fortified in 1900, against the Boxers. Within this compound are the Orthodox Church, the Russian doctor, the rooms of the twenty Cossacks of the Guard, and the great empty barracks of the two *sotnias* that were sent here in Boxer times, and were, to the regret of their compatriots, later removed. The barracks are still ready for any future visits, and the breastwork, with its stake and fosse lined with barbed-wire, is equal to any force which from a five-hundred-verst radius can assemble against it.

In this quarter, the Russian consul is autocrat. He is the official notary, without whose stamp no contract is legal, the chief of police, the guardian of orphans. Around him revolves the society of the few dozen mondaines of Urga, whose personnel consists of the officials, the garrison officers, and some half-dozen commercial agents, single generally, or with distant families. They conduct their bachelor quar-

ters through Chinese servants, and their cuisines are helped out by all the canned and bottled delicacies that can be ordered from the frontier. The gold-mines, and the extensive wool-trade which produces a commerce of twenty to thirty millions, demand that first-grade men watch the interests of the great companies which handle the business. So men of the best cosmopolitan Russian type come, at salaries proportioned to their sacrifice. They gather in the consulate evenings, or sit in the fenced-off boxes at the theatrical performances, which periodically come down from Kiahta.

A few families who have made their sixteen-day camel-trip from Kalgan and Peking have foregathered here with their household goods and gods.

Buttressed by the companionship of books, this other class lives in splendidly-furnished rooms, with pictures purchased in Paris, statuettes from Rome, and grand pianos drawn for days over the passes by laboring oxen. One converses at the consulate in French, the mother tongue of none, but the common tongue of all. The few favored guests, who are invited of necessity over and over, play chess endlessly in the evenings. The ladies read the latest French novels, or sing the songs that distant friends have sent from the Riviera or St. Petersburg.

They drive in imported carriages and sleighs for the afternoon airing, and bemoan Nice and Monte Carlo in winter over the pages of Zola's "Rome." The men subscribe extensively to English, French,



German, and Russian periodicals. They invite such relatives as can be persuaded for lengthy stays, and shower a guest with the hospitality of old claret, caviar, and the varied courtesies which the rarity of visitors from the world inspires. They take long adventurous horseback trips in the dull season, — explore forgotten monasteries, study the Tibetan inscriptions, print monographs on the folk-tales, and dream of promotion and Petersburg.

The consulate has one uniquely circumstanced personality, whose career is a romance of Eastern adventure. Born in the Baltic provinces, he studied in the Oriental training-schools, and entered the Russian diplomatic service at Peking. Here he applied himself indefatigably, until he knew the Chinese language as did hardly another European. He could write the ten thousand ideographs, and could speak flawlessly the Mandarin and the popular dialects. He went to Mongolia and mastered its languages also, — its spoken idioms and its written grapevine letters. Then, with his diplomatic entrée, his knowledge of men and tongues, and the initiative of an adventurer, he launched his grand coup in the palace of Peking.

He carried away the sole right to the gold of two *eimucks*, a territory as large as France. Not a Chinaman may pan the metal, not a Slav may open a mine, save through this concessionnaire. A third of all gold washed, — these are his terms to those who would lease from him; just double what he pays the

Peking Yamen for his privilege. Fortune upon fortune he is reported to have made, and the Chinese gold-washers and the Russian miners who lease from him have gathered their own stakes, too, despite the Cæsar's tribute which he exacts of all that they produce.

He has spent large sums in bringing down machinery, to do on a great scale what the shallow veins of ore demanded should be done on a limited scale. An abandoned gold-dredge lies far up the Iro River, transported piecemeal at exorbitant expense over the hills. Traction-engines are here, which could not cope with the Mongol roads. They consumed forty days going one hundred and twenty miles to the largest mine. Now they lie rusting in their sheds. Thousands of ox-carts were engaged for hauling in the various purchases. River steamers and great oil-drills scattered over northern Mongolia are relics of his ambition.

His brick house, finely furnished, and his brick smelter stand hard-by the consulate. The Russians tell of masons imported from Sweden to build them. The life-history is a bizarre record of great things attempted by a man whose overleaping ambition stopped nowhere, and whose expenditures more than once brought him down. But his interesting meteoric career continues, and twenty *pud* of gold are said still to come down yearly from the mines to the most picturesque character in Russian Urga.

We drive down with one of the officials, to be

present at another of the events in Urga's meagre happenings — the arrival of the mail.

The Russian post, one delivery a week, crosses Mongolia. The horses bring in three mails from the Russian frontier. From Urga to Kalgan, the camel-post guarded by Cossacks, traverses the great desert of Gobi. Save the Imperial Chinese telegraph, it is the only regular method of intercourse with the outside world. The two thousand-odd roubles a year paid by Russia as a subsidy are a small expenditure for the opportunity of accustoming the people to her service, and for controlling the avenues of news and communication.

The post-office is at the consulate, and a new postmaster has just been installed. Thereby hangs a tale which is poured into your ear before your stay in Urga has been much protracted.

A telegram came from Irkutsk to seize and bring to Verhneudinsk as propagandists the postmaster's son and daughter — twenty-one and eighteen. Twenty Cossacks surrounded the house at three in the morning. The two were arrested, taken to the mayor's house, and lodged there. The next day they were started on the trail to Kiahta. Once over the border, there would be no more hope. Quickly the leading men of the colony assembled and telegraphed the Russian ambassador at Peking, knowing that if the ambassador had official cognizance, he could not safely authorize an arrest on Chinese soil by the Cossacks of the Guard. The response was



delayed, but there was pressure enough upon the consul to get the prisoners held at the mining-camp beyond Iro until the answer was received. At length the ambassador replied that Chinese suzerainty must be respected. The two were free. But the father had been advised to resign his post and accept a station which was offered him at Kalgan, where there were only three Russians, all warranted proof against propaganda.

Beyond the Russian consulate, six versts, is the Chinese town called, as are many of these trading-posts, Maimachen, or place of trade. One can get there by the solitary Cossack-driven droshky that the Russian colony supports. But more appropriately we go on pony-back, borrowing an army-saddle and a purple fleece-lined *shuba*, whose skirts reach around the knees, and whose long sleeves fold over the hands, keeping a rider reasonably warm in cold weather.

The houses of Mongol Urga are soon left behind, the stockaded lamasery is passed on the left, and we are on a big open plain. A few minutes' gallop takes us past the consulate. Beyond it stands a compound girded by a stockade of saplings, within which are the low mud walls of straggling houses, amid which the gilded eaves of a more pretentious residence lift themselves above the rest.

A troop of pig-tailed horsemen trots past: the white tunics of the riders are covered, back and breast, with red ideograph letters, which stigmatize

the bearers as of the lowest caste — soldiers of the Celestial service. The man in front holds aloft a gilded pear-shaped standard, and between the ranks lumbers a covered cart with closed shutters. The cavalcade wheels to the right and turns in, dipping the standard as they pass under the gargoyle-tipped beams of the gateway. Servants come running out of the great house. From the cart is helped down a Manchu of pallid face and short gray mustache. That wooden house, girded by mud huts, is the seat of government for this greatest *eimuck* in Mongolia. The figure robed in cheap blue cotton is lord of life and death, the *Zinzin*, Viceroy for the Emperor of China.

This Manchu Viceroy, and his *Tu-T'ung*, or lieutenant-governor, who represents Chinese authority in the city of Kalgan, are responsible for the collection of tribute, the administration of justice in the cities, and the maintenance of order. Over the Chinese inhabitants in the Maimachen the rule through the agency of the prefect of police appointed by the Viceroy is direct and absolute.

Over the Mongols, Chinese rule is exercised in an irregular nebulous fashion, with some force in the centres and almost none in the outlying districts, where the old nomad organization of society, with princes, barons, or *tai-tsi*, clergy, and ordinary black men, still persists. A code of Chinese laws exists, but in general justice is dealt out by the local princes, or *guns*, who receive also the cattle-tax in



CHINESE MANDARIN



GIGIN, THE LIVING BUDDHA





some districts, and who go by turns for a year to Peking in symbol of homage.

These Mongol *guns*, ruling over each of the *hu-shouns*, or counties, which compose the *eimucks*, are under feudal obligations to the Chinese Emperor. Their visible subjection to China consists of ceremonial visits with tribute, for which the Emperor's return gifts are of far greater value. A total of one hundred and twenty thousand *lens* of silver (\$90,000) goes yearly from the Emperor to the nomad nobility. A khan of the first rank receives two thousand *lens* (\$1500) and twenty-five pieces of silk; lesser gentry in proportion.

This primitive aristocracy lives in barbaric state, with splendid carpets, silver-inlaid furniture, and jeweled accoutrements. The women are sometimes very good-looking. They are laden with ornaments, furs and silks, and have a spot of carmine on each cheek, which is the prerogative of a princess. But the normal imagination does not go beyond the *gir* as a dwelling. Finely fitted it may be, yet it remains a one-room hut, with the open brazier in its centre. Their wealth is in ancestral ornaments, and in the flocks and herds of their private domains. Their one relic and memorial of a past sway lies in the custom under which the Chinese rulers call by the old Mongol names the *eimucks*, which were the ancestors' kingdoms. That of which Urga is capital still bears the name of Tu-she-tu.

The Mongol lords are responsible for the feudal

army, and a caste of bannermen exists, who are paid nominally two ounces of silver per month and a supply of grain, with the corresponding duty of keeping their bows and arrows in order. In the Tu-she-tu khanate of the eastern Khalka tribes, there are twenty banners, each under an hereditary *yassak*, or tributary prince. In 1900 some banners of the Barukhs turned out to fight Russians, but they made no showing whatever, and hurriedly returned after a skirmish with the Cossacks. Spears and arrows are the only weapons the Mongol army can show.

While this feudal system applies in general to the whole *eimuck*, in Urga the Gigin has a unique position. The city is a great monastery, practically all of the permanent native population of fifteen thousand being priests. The laymen who are there are mostly pilgrims, or dependents upon the Church. Over these the Gigin is master, so that Urga is known as "The Holy Living God's Encampment."

Over the Russians and the Buriat tribesmen, the Chinese have no actual sway, and from them they collect no taxes. The Russian consul is dictator to this little flock; and behind his stockade, where the tricolor waves, rally the Orthodox in times of danger.

Across from the *Zinzin's* doorway is a spiked stockade. Inside, where they have been thrust through a hole just big enough for a man's body, are



the miserable criminals. In the big pit dug with their naked hands, the wretches cower, shelterless, under the terrible cold of winter. They live or die there, sometimes fed by the charity of Mongols, sometimes forgotten, sometimes purchasing miserable fragments of offal with the unstolen remnants of the prison allowance. Few waste sympathy on the inmates. The low level of existence of those outside makes the place perhaps less terrible than it would be to people who had known other conditions. It is a grim Chinese jest, this loathsome prison for those who have stolen bread in the market-place, set opposite the palace of the grafting governor who has filched the tribute of Tu-she-tu.

From the Chinese city now, there begins to come the distant throb of drums and clash of cymbals. Three gorgeous Mongols gallop past in their splendid free-reined horsemanship. A sentry stalks to the door of the stockaded prison, and looks toward the gray walls and temples of Maimachen. The procession of the New Moon is to pass to-day.

You leap onto your little Mongol riding-pony, and spurring him into a gallop, hasten along the way to the Chinese city. He tears down the broad road. The resplendent trotting horsemen take the pace as a challenge, and yell joyfully for a race as their whips come down on their own horses' flanks. Mongol girls walking hand in hand along the highway scatter and call out as the riders clatter by. It is contagious. Soon a score of riders are shouting, shaking bridles,

and lashing ponies, and it is a cavalcade of racers that gallops up to the gate of Maimachen.

How different is this Chinese settlement from Mongol Urga! It is a magnified replica of the city at the frontiers. Instead of the straggly avenues a hundred yards broad, with cañon-like alleys flanked by high mud walls, all the streets are so narrow that two strides cross them. They are lined with miniature booths. Through the bars of their paper-paned windows one sees the little delicately-tinted pictures of pagodas and of Chinese girls, in quaint sweeping outlines. Red and black and gold, the New Year placards flame on every post and wall. Lanterns are hung before the gateways; green saplings stand sentinel by the doors; and in the unshuttered compounds innumerable lines of gaudy banners are seen, strung from side to side across the courtyards. From the houses come from time to time a thrumming and a picking of strings in minor music, broken by an occasional clang of cymbals or a drone of beaten drums. You pass a temple of marvelously carved wood, wrought into curves and flowers and arabesques, with eaves turning out into open-mouthed dragons. Everything is brilliant in paint and gilt — a blazing kaleidoscope of color.

In a friendly courtyard the horses are tied, and you walk into the teeming streets. All the Chinese of Maimachen and half the Mongols of Urga have come out to-day. Here is a little shifty-eyed Chinese clerk, in his low shoes, with white soles several

inches thick, his white stockings, tied at the ankle, showing below the baggy trousers.

Here is a young Mongol lama, who hails you gleefully with a Russian word which he has learned from a Buriat, and points out where the procession will emerge. A Mongol woman passes, gorgeously dressed in flowered yellow silk, with red, sable-cuffed sleeves so long as nearly to touch the ground, and her head cuirassed with the burden of silver ornaments. She smiles at the burly Mongol camel-driver who so openly admires her.

A Chinese merchant, with red-buttoned cap, attended by a servant, is pushing through the crowd. His looks are surly; perhaps he is thinking of the whereabouts of his own establishment in this carnival.

Though the rich and wifeless Chinese may acquire Mongol companions, they cannot buy or give affection. For a poor Mongol, who has the sincerity and humanness which the Chinaman withholds, one of these Mongol concubines will either deceive her master, or, if he object too vigorously, will strip herself of his presents and go to her lover's *gir*.

A big Celestial with a fuse comes hastily through the gateway from which the procession is to emerge. The crash of his firecrackers startles the Mongol ponies pushed close along the houses. Beneath the multi-colored gateway, next pour out a score of horsemen with pennanted spears. They ride two by two, in white coats with red letters on their breasts.



Then comes a crowd of footmen, who fill the street in a torrent. The curious Mongols press to each side, and watch the procession of their alien overlords. Two ranks are robed in vivid red, and carry poles with big gold knobs. Blue-coated Chinamen, with cymbals and shrilling fifes, follow; then come more horsemen; then the great silken umbrella, and a gray-mustached dignitary on horseback, — the chief of police; next, more fifers and wand-carriers, six abreast. With fireworks and clashing music, the vivid ranks in red and blue, and yellow and gold, and green and purple, and every other conceivable combination of hues, make their way around the stockade and back again through the gated city.

The crowd seems to be trending now toward a brilliantly colored archway spanning the main street. With the Mongol holiday-makers we follow along into a cloistered courtyard flanked by peaked temple-like houses. A crowd of Chinese is pressing around some one clad in blue, who has just stepped out between the beater of a tom-tom and an artist with a big pair of cymbals. A preliminary flourish introduces the performer — a pasty-faced young Chinaman. He starts a rhythmic chant whose cadence is within a note or two of one of the old crooning Negro melodies of our South. Over and over again he chants it. A poet this is. He has conned his verses, and now comes out to sing them. He ends with a special swirl in what is evidently a very comic climax. The drum and cymbals crash out



CHINESE ARCHWAY, URG MAIMACHEN





once more, and another chanter comes — this one old and feeble, with a curiously penetrating voice. He drones a long hexameter-footed epic, in which the harsh Chinese *gh* and *wh* sounds are not so coarsely enunciated as in the poem of the first reciter. "That is one of the old legend-singers," you are told. It is such a ballad as Homer sang, or the Welsh bards chanted. It is the poetry and the history of the long past, the immemorial past, far before the infancy of other nations; for China keeps alive her antiquity, and in her old age never forgets.

This week there can be no buying or selling. The Moon must be honored, but visits are in order. Your friend brings you to meet a leading Chinese merchant. At the house, a grille of thick wooden bars runs down to the street level from the eaves just above one's head. Looking through them, one can see over the little square window the most delicately-traced pictures on a white background. The panes are of paper, all save one, which is of glass, so that the owner may see if, coming down the street, any one turns and climbs the three steps into the ordinarily wide-open door of his house.

The home of our host, which is likewise his office, is finely fitted up and faultlessly clean. His light-blue silk robes are immaculate. Two servants wait at table, bringing in the best of China tea and French "petit-beurre" biscuits for our delectation. Everything is appetizing and orderly.

As we are sitting over the cups with the Chinese

merchant, the boy comes to announce visitors, and two blue-robed fellow countrymen enter. One has a strip of light-blue silk laid over his two arms, which he stretches out. The host extends his own arms and receives it, then gives it back to the newcomer, who goes down on one knee and again presents it. The merchant takes it a second time and bows, this time retaining it. The two guests bend and leave the room. "New Year's presents," the merchant explains. Again the boy comes in and announces a guest. A Mongol messenger enters, goes down on one knee, and presents a red slip, black-lettered. "Visiting-card," the host explains. Then, with a smile, "White, like yours, not polite." He accepts this too. "*Ch'ou Ta-tzu!*" (the dirty Tatar!) he says as the latter leaves.

The calls continue, and our visit. The host is charming, cultured, educated; he speaks English well, and lacks in no attention. But you wonder if, when you leave, he is not going to murmur about you, "Yong-kwei-tsz!" (foreign devil!)

Throughout all intercourse with these Chinese, one has always the uneasy consciousness that one is doubtless, as with the card, unwittingly offending. There are three hundred rules of ceremony, three thousand formulæ of behavior, regulated by a classic tradition. The ritual is so drilled into the Chinese as to become instinctive. Celestial breeding would dictate that the little formalism which precedes a rubber, "May I play to hearts, if you please?"

be stretched to cover every action of life. The left, not the right, is the place of honor, and to enter a room facing wrongly is a slight. An irregular method of folding a red New-Year's card, and the failure in writing to raise one character above the level of the rest, are breaches of etiquette.

For our race there is always felt, behind the soul-mask of Chinese eyes, a contempt. The kindness of our host to-day is unfailing. Yet we are not at ease or sure of the ground. Errors, condoned to keep face, are often inwardly resented. If you put your hat on the Mongol's altar, everybody in the hut will yell out for you to take it off. When you remove it, they will nod understandingly as the interpreter explains that the ignorant foreigner transgressed inadvertently. Forthwith all is forgotten in an enthusiastic discussion of the last case of botts among the horses. But with these Chinese one can never tell if, by taking a chop-stick between the wrong fingers, one has not intimated that the host's grandfather was a cross-eyed coolie soldier. No one will challenge or set a man right, but the breach will be silently resented, though the tea continues to be smilingly offered.

The old-time Chinese dealers at Urga grew enormously wealthy in the tea-trade to Kiahta. These have mostly gone back to China. But there are still a number of the better-class merchants whose wares are sold to the traders and by them to the Mongols. The house of Liu-Shang-Yuan claims two hundred



years of establishment. The Urga people are still prosperous, for great sums in religious tribute come from all Mongolia to this Lourdes of Lamaism. There are also many Chinamen who make large profits from wool.

Of a total trade in Urga estimated at twenty-five million roubles per year, nine tenths is in the hands of Celestials. The remainder is Russian, for the Mongols are entirely without a merchant class. Of the exports, wool is the main item. Some two hundred thousand *puds* are sent from Urga annually, four fifths of which go to the United States. While cotton cloth, cutlery, kitchen-utensils, and other European goods come down from Russia, the bulk of the imports are brought from China by caravan, through Kalgan. Silks come from Shanghai, and tea from Hankow, passing via Peking. There is trade, too, with Ulasati in western Mongolia. It is the centre of a fur and hide country which is isolated from outlets toward Russia by the high mountains, and must send caravans to Kiahta. Its communication with China is either by Urga and Kalgan, or by the caravan-route further south.

When the holiday-time is over we see more of the Chinese traders. Sitting in the shops, with one of these, and glancing out over the little counter of the sales-room, we converse as the customers come and go.

The Russian in his shop shows all he has of wares, the red and magenta cloths, the enameled kettles,

the cutlery and sweetmeats. But the Chinaman wraps his goods in hieroglyphic-covered papers, and all that can be seen are rows of long-stemmed brass-bowled pipes, and an array of silver and bronze tea-pots on shelves at one side. Very rare things, too, our Chinese host can produce. Shanghai silks of finest texture, ten roubles the *arsheen*; jade mouth-pieces for the pipes at a hundred *taels*; Hankow tea culled from the tenderest shoots. Everything is labeled and systematized in the Chinaman's place, and he goes at once to the packet which he wishes to show.

A dozen Chinese, with bright blue silk jackets over their black surtouts, invade now the home of the merchant. The red knot on their black skull-caps and the length of their queues and finger-nails show them to be men of some importance. They take off the bright-colored ear-tabs as they enter. They are down to buy wool. To-day they visit, next week they will trade. Then all but one will sit in the outer shop, while the spokesman alone will go into the inner room and confer with the merchant. From time to time the spokesman will go back to the party and consult, till in the end the bargain is made. They will all hold to the agreement, too, whichever way the market goes. For in this the Chinese are inflexibly honest. A local Chinaman dispatched a mounted messenger the six versts to Urga, to return to us twenty kopecks which he had overcharged by a slip of his abacus-adder.

Yet the Scotch engineers saw shells in the arsenals loaded with clay when the native troops went against the Japanese. The English miners in the Province of Shan-tung have had their profits cut to nothing by the official "squeezes," and Chinese have bought in the depreciated stocks.

The ethic code of the squeeze seems to be very nice. It is a point of honor, almost always scrupulously observed, that the first-fruits of official graft go to repaying the one who advanced the money to buy the office. A Chinaman, who could not be trusted to administer honestly a trust fund of a hundred *taels*, will repay this obligation to his backer. Thus must he keep face.

From the tax-appraiser who numbers the sheep to the civil governor who receives the lumps of silver tribute for transmission to Peking, every official gets his squeeze. They say in the *eimuck* of Ulasati, where sables are part of the tribute, that the officials take out the best furs and put back poor skins to keep the number the same; and in Urga, that the enormously rich administration takes a Tammany third of the tribute. There has never been a viceroy yet, it is reported, who has left Mongolia poor. Yet each official plays straight with his backer, his "belly-band." Very curious is this race, and there live few Westerners who can at all understand it.

We ride back in the evening from the Chinese city (for none may stay for the night), buried in



recurring reveries. How brightly glitters the face, and how barren is the heart in Maimachen! Never the thousand ties of kinship and affection, never the thrill of citizenship, never the love of a home. How little generosity, too, or sympathy for the people of the land! The Mongols are but "tame barbarians," as of old were stigmatized the tributary Formosans. Now and then one finds a Chinaman out among the nomad Mongols. Perhaps he may be a watcher at a distant temple, perhaps a telegraph-operator on the two lines that go, one to Kalgan and Peking, one to Kiahta and Russia. Always he is something solitary—different. There is an almost sinister splendor in this aloofness—this self-sufficiency of walled cities and compounds where none but Chinese may dwell. What a rebuff of nationhood in the gates that shut out at night all save the alien outlanders! What contempt in the law that no woman of China may come among these Mongol people, as if the very air were contamination! How the natives are silently despised, whose bodies in death go to the dogs, while the Chinaman's, in a casket, is sent back over the long leagues to his home!

The homeless, wifeless, Chinese city, with the quarter of Mongol women without the walls,—it is in many ways typical of all Chinese rule in Mongolia. For, as the Celestial trader defaults in the duty of marrying the Mongol mother of his children, so China defaults in many of the duties that are inherent in suzerainty. One resents the heavy

Chinese yoke on the necks of these simple frank-hearted Mongolians. They are a race of great good-humored children, and they are exploited while disdained.

We are thinking of this unfairness as we ride back along the road to Urga. Behind is the distant Chinese city, the Manchu Viceroy's straggling palace, the picketed prison-stockade. Before is the drooping tricolor banner of the Czar, and the white and green of the Greek Church, with its far-seen golden crucifix. A crowd of brilliantly-clad Mongols, lamas and laymen and girls and youths, are strolling back from Maimachen. They are laughing and chattering, and in uncouth playfulness are pushing one another about across the road.

Half a dozen of the *Zinzin's* Chinese foot-guard are likewise coming from Urga, stolid-faced, superior. As they reach the tumultuous band it sinks into silence, and the men crowd to the side of the road that the Chinese may pass.

They tramp by without a glance. Then out from the Russian barrack-gate swings a little Cossack in his great black sheepskin hat, gray tunic, clattering curved sabre, boots and spurs. He is one of the Zabaikalskaia Buriats, whom Russians call Bratskie, the brotherly people. He speaks a tongue so similar to the Mongol that all these people can understand him. They look up to him as a rich relative, fortunate in overflowing measure. For on the pilgrimages of Buddhist Buriats to Urga, their wives







THE GRE





THE GREAT WALL





have told the wondering Mongol women of the sewing-machines which they have at home to stitch linings, and have allowed the visitors to peep into their mirrors. The Mongol men have admired the Buriats' breech-loading rifle, worth six horses at current quotations. They have enviously heard tell that in Russia one pays no cow-*alba*, but the young men get a uniform and free food when they ride out to give their Cossack service to the Czar. They have listened to Buriat boasts of the warm houses of Siberia, and stacks of hay, and stored-up harvests. So Mongols smile when the Buriats come to their *girls*. They say, "Rich smooth Buriats! Great lords! Give candle, give sugar, give tobacco, give vodka."

Has not a little Zabaikalskaia Buriat reason to swagger when he starts from the Russian barrack-gate to see his lady in Urga? And should a Cossack of the Czar step aside for a Chinaman in the shadow of the Eagles? Head erect, with a look to right and then to left, hand on sabre, he swings straight down the centre of the road, and right through the Chinese soldiers. Without dispute they open a way. He chucks a not unwilling girl under the chin as he passes the Mongols, and he is good-naturedly hailed by the rest: "Hello, Cossack! Why so fast? She has gone away with a lama." And he goes a bit faster toward Urga.

These Cossacks, terrible in war, friends and equals with the conquered in peace, are those who have held the Russian vanguard in this march to

China, — the march which began when the two *hatamans* of Moscow, commanded by Ivan the Terrible, started in 1507 on their long tramp eastward. The Cossacks it was whom Yermak led to the conquest of Sibir. Through them, in storm and stress, despite oppression and convict-gangs, with faults and failings, omissions and commissions, the advance of Russia has been the way of civilization where none could otherwise have come.

“It will mean much when a Russian railway follows our trail from Kiahta,” says Alexsimevich; and André adds: “They will all be glad when the Cossacks come to Kalgan.”

## VII

### RUSSIA IN EVOLUTION

**N**EW times have come to Russia with the events that have halted her armies. The Slav, looking and reaching outward, has been hurled violently back upon himself, and he turns to look inward. The stream of Slavic civilization still flows eastward. But now held back at the frontiers, its tide is rising behind the impounding barriers and is lifting on its wave the level of national life. Its scour is undermining here and there, its laden currents are depositing and filling in the interstices of the social fabric. The struggle is intensified to achieve representative government, to secure administrative reform, to relieve the distress of the peasantry. The people are in evolutionary throes and are sweeping forward in the arts of peace, in the science of government, and in the myriad lines of internal development.

The movements of empire-advance have been noted because they have been conspicuously visualized. But the economic and social growth have been only slightly regarded by our western world, intent upon great events, crises, conflicts lost and won. The seizure of a hamlet in Manchuria has obscured the founding of twenty cities in Siberia.



The continent-cleaving Siberian Railway has now revealed, in the Russian occupation of northern Asia, not an exploiting colonial enterprise, but a race-movement akin to the European invasion of our Aryan ancestors. The upward struggle of a people striving to find itself is embodied in imperial rescripts and armed revolts, in dumas and dynamite, where rival titans grapple for the throw. There is now therefore in the world a more earnest watching of this metamorphosing Russian people. What are the types of civilization, the beliefs, the manners of thought, the institutions that are to hold mastery over the largest area on the globe occupied by a single nation?

To comprehend a people and the course of its evolution one must pierce below the surface of ephemeral and contemporary incident, and probe the primitive racial elements. Russia is to-day iceberg-like. The crumbling, upper ice, honey-combed by eating waves, is exposed; but submerged and unseen is the massive blue block beneath. Because rotten surface-structures are obvious, many fail to appreciate what lies in the depths. There comes understanding for much when one sounds the ancient sources in race-history.

From the earliest times Russia lay across the path of incessant invasion from Asia. In 1224 the Mongols swept down upon the old Scythian plains. There were no mountain fastnesses in which the sparse population could defend itself. The followers

of Genghis Khan, through the years that followed, destroyed town after town, — Bolgari, Suzdal, Yaroslavl, Tver, — devastated Volkynia, and Galicia, until all Russia, save Novgorod, was brought under Tatar rule. Their devastations cut off the population of whole provinces, and changed old Russian cities, such as Kiev, to hybrid towns of Asiatics. At Sarai on the Volga, for two centuries Tatar sovereigns ruled; and here from being pagan they became adherents of Islam. Russia's foreign master was confirmed in a religion as antagonistic as was his race. To these aliens Russia gave humiliating homage and paid tribute, and from their khans her czar received permit to rule. Thus in her infancy she had a foreign race, not as servile members of the humble labor class, but in the wild, fierce scourge of conquerors.

Throughout this period many Russian princes married into noble Mongol families, and Mongol officers formed alliances with the Russian boyars. The Muscovite aristocracy had already grown into strong Oriental proclivities from contact with its southern neighbor, the Byzantine, and these became confirmed under the Tatar. One czar, at least, Boris Godunov, was of Mongol birth. Incessant war harassed the people. Alexander Nevski, of Novgorod, beat back the Swedes; but, abasing himself, he went to the Tatar khan with the tribute of a country too feeble still to resist him. By and by Russia began to rally and to strengthen

her centres, Novgorod, Kiev, and Vladimir. Moscow arose — that small destiny-city where Simon the Proud, even in vassalage, dared to dream of unity and nationality, and took the title of “Prince of all the Russias.” His grandson made the first great stand against the Mongols and won in the field of Tula, which, with the fights of Alexander Nevski, gives to chroniclers and bards their early Russian ballads, or *bilinî*. Moscow, punished cruelly, was razed almost to the ground. But the Bear was aroused and goaded into desperation. Russia reeled to her feet, and for nearly a hundred years she fought, she lost, she fell; but she rose again and fought on, until at last the power of the Tatar terror was broken and the tyrant was driven over her border. Still, for a hundred years more, she was forcing back his inroads, and rescuing the winding trains of her children, toiling over the southern steppes to be sold as slaves at Kaffa. This was Russia in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

That Europe was spared this, she owes to the Russian. Through those crucial centuries when the Slav, weak, torn, anguished, beset with foes around and foes within, was standing grimly at the perilous portal of civilization, Europe, within the temple, safe by his grace, was privileged to work up into light, to cement her nationalities, to effect the liberation of her masses, and to develop her intellect into the magnificent promise of a printing-press, a people's Bible, and a Shakespeare.



But to the brave warden of that portal there was not the sweetness and the light. For him were the seams and the scars, the mutinous passions of the strife. Long after the clouds of the Dark Ages had cleared from the face of western Europe, they hung over Russia. The Slav was back in his Dark Ages yet, heir only to a barbaric experience. Here he must start, where Europe had started nearly a thousand years before, where America, in the favor of Providence, was never to be called upon to start. For him were the memories of subjection and the blood of contention; but also, in relief, to him were the stolid patience and endurance which were to serve him so well. He groped along in the shadow until the coming of the great Peter.

But now arose a man. He, too, had dreamed the dream of empire, — vast, masterful. He set about making his dream real. He found Russia a small inland state, torn by faction, barbarian, and Oriental. Though himself the descendant of a long line of Byzantine kings, half monk, half emperor, he saw with the insight of genius, and he knew that that way did not lie greatness. Therefore fully and fiercely he broke with the past and set himself to the future.

Between him and that future stood the Strelitz. The walls of the Kremlin, and the Red Square told the doom of their barring conservatism. He warred with the Turk, he fought the Cossack, he routed the Swedes, again and again, taking whole provinces on

his Baltic outlet and securing the coveted Neva. He embroiled himself with Persia, and through Baku opened a way to the Caspian. Then, with a high hand, he swept out the customs that made for Orientalism. He broke the seclusion of women, the prostrations, banished the caftan, the beard, and the flowing robes. He lifted his people bodily and violently out of their past, and set them down face-front to a new order. The Russia he had received a province, he left an empire. The Russia he had received Asiatic, he left European, and already a force in Europe. And when arose one of his own blood — a reversal — who would undo the herculean labor of this master-builder, who would give back to Sweden those priceless, wave-washed Baltic provinces, and, restoring the capital to Moscow, return to an Oriental estate, the patriot was stronger than the father, and at the price of his son's life he bought the progress of Russia. Here in this man, who died in 1725, we can truly say that Modern Russia begins.

Through this skeleton history can be traced the structure of the modern state, as in the struggle for survival may be found the root and early warrant of her governmental system. Every element, physical and ethnic, was, and still is, a handicap. Russia is not protected by the ramparts of the sea; she is surrounded on all sides by nations with whom her history has been that of perennial conflict. In place of a compacted, well-peopled country, she has an

empire extended gradually from frozen Nova Zembla to Afghanistan, from the Danube mouth to Behring's arctic sea. She is a land of many distinct peoples, as foreign to each other as Lithuanians and wild Kirghis; as alien in religion as Catholic and Mohammedan. She is divided into one knows not how many tribes, numbers of them completely barbarous. Her eastern and south-eastern frontiers call for defense across vast and vacant stretches. Her northern and western borders are occupied by Finns and Poles, unforgetful forever of their own days of sovereignty, naturally and rightly jealous for the memories and the prerogatives that are its legacy.

With the eastern problem living from the first on her immediate border, with her many tribes wayward, Russia early strove to fuse her empire into national unity. In old Poland had been seen the fearful price which feebleness and disunion pay to fate. How much greater was the menace to polyglot Russia, were her master-grip to relax! That she should hold a strong hand over the elements that ever threatened her disruption was the first national necessity. This supreme obligation to herself in her entirety compelled a firm, commanding, centralized authority. The mould that was to shape such metal had need of rigidity and unyielding strength. To meet these race-desires, not as a purposeless tyranny but as the fruit of a long evolving system, arose the autocracy.



The system reached its climax in the most absolute administration of modern times at the period of the American Revolution; the "Government Statute of 1775" meshed all things and all men into the institutions of despotism; Russia groaned under the iron rule of a Nicholas, yet rejoiced in the belief that strength was there, and sure defense from domestic disunion and foreign aggression; then, in the Crimea, came a revelation of the inefficiency of the bureaucratic juggernaut. Despite the stubborn valor of the defenders of Sevastopol, despite the gallant efforts of the aged autocrat, the glory of Russia went down in the blaze of her city and her fleet.

The old régime had failed. Even the Czar, before he died, could read the lesson but could not act. How pathetic the words of the failing monarch: "My successor may do what he will, I cannot change."

With the accession of Alexander to the throne in 1855, on the sudden death of Nicholas, came the first effective steps toward modern institutions. The young czar, a self-declared friend of progress, raised regally the standard of reform. All Russia rose to the hopes of his idealism. Corruption in office, which had before been rampant, was crushed out by the sheer force of public opinion. Pamphlets circulated freely, uncensored. Meetings were everywhere held to discuss the varied plans of a vivified government. With a whole nation become to a

degree transcendental, the Czar began his reign and his reforms.

First of all for righting, as it was first in evil, came serfdom. Summoning commissions of his ablest advisers, seeking counsel of the proprietors and their coöperation in an act of self-abnegation, the Czar proceeded to the execution of his great task. For three years every side and every phase of the problem was studied. Then at length with a fundamental law which forecovered every detail of the situation, Alexander II put his signature, February 19, 1861, to the great Ukase of Liberation.

In Russia's past there is much to answer for before the judgment-bar, in omission and in commission. Yet, giving but justice to ruler and people, it must be allowed that the measure which freed the serfs ranks, with Magna Charta and the American Constitution, among the mightiest agencies of advance that mankind has ever known. A dependent population of nearly forty-six million souls was given liberty. The great act was accomplished peacefully, and the measures were executed without any trouble worthy of the name, in a spirit equitable to the old owners as well as to the serfs. Not alone were the latter released from bondage, they were provided, one and all, with land and livelihood. They were given, in everything that concerned their local administration, entire freedom from interference by their old masters or by the members of the Administration. The righteous deed

that the American Republic achieved nearly three years later liberated but one ninth the number of the Russian bondmen. It did so at the cost of the deadliest fratricidal war of modern times, and the impoverishment of one quarter of its people. All the work of the Freedmen's Bureau through the Reconstruction period could not insure to a tithe of the Negroes the opportunity for a livelihood, — this that Russia provided inalienably for each of her liberated. To this day the American Negro in many places is under special civic disabilities more galling than those imposed anywhere in the Russian Empire.

The protection of the former serfs was skillfully arranged by grouping them in self-governing village communes, to which land enough was given on a long-term repayment basis. In each, by an assembly composed of all the heads of households, periodic allotments of the common territory were made to the individuals. Compact economic units, whose property could not be sold, were built up against alienation of the land or poverty-induced peonage. The rendering of justice in local disputes was delegated to the peasant courts, — the only tribunals in Russia, save the National Senate, from which there is no appeal.

The Mir, complete within itself, was responsible to the Imperial Government for good order and the taxes, and was secure from molestation provided these duties were fulfilled. Its inhabitants, united





THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW



and independent, were able to resist any encroachment by their former masters or by neighboring landlords.

It is not unworthy of note that up to the present time the liberties in economic matters thus granted have rarely been infringed by the authorities, nor have the village assemblies been exploited as a play in politics or to attain personal ends. While agriculturally and industrially the communal land provisions have become insufficient, cramping, perhaps baneful, and no longer necessary now that society is in equilibrium, nevertheless the germ of free institutions fecundated in the Mir, when dissociated from its communal features, is admirable still, and is capable of becoming the foundation for real self-government.

Plans for provincial assemblies as a further extension of local home rule had been under consideration since 1859. On January 1, 1864, an Imperial Ukase was promulgated instituting Semstvos in thirty-three governments. To this assembly, proprietor and peasant, rich and poor, elected their representatives. Each Semstvo was to appoint its own executive to carry out the laws it decreed.

The jurisdiction of this assembly, though confined to local and non-political matters, was wide. Rates, streets, convocations, posts, sanitary measures, famine-relief, fire-insurance, schools, agricultural improvement, all land, house, and factory taxes (those upon imperial as well as those upon



private domains), were given into the Semstvo control. It was granted partial powers over various other minor matters. It exercised practically all the economic and social functions of local governmental activity save what fell to the *Mirs*. It was welcomed as an epoch-making institution. The liberal press of the period hailed it as a living guidon of the upward way, as the blessed daylight of a constitutional government.

So indeed it might have become. In the new Emperor's mind there germinated a whole peaceful revolution. He had plans for new courts of justice, reorganization of the army, reform of the civil administration, and popular representative government, with an elected national chamber.

But in the midst of his reforms broke out the Polish insurrection. The Czar had granted to the Poles elective councils in each district of government and in the chief cities; he had appointed a Pole his Minister of Public Instruction, and had made many concessions to their old language. Iron and blood crushed out the insurrection, but it had brought to the great Czar Liberator the conviction that liberty spelled disunion for Russia, and this belief was never to be dispelled.

Upon the Semstvo assemblies, no longer uplifted by the old generous enthusiasm of the sovereign, pressed little by little the dead weight of executive officialdom. One by one their functions were lopped away. More and more the selection of delegates was

transferred to the administrative officials. The marshals of noblesse became chairmen, the governors vetoing overlords. Before the death of Alexander II, his once-cherished creations had lapsed from independent state legislatures into anomalous, semi-advisory councils, discussing roads, land-taxes, agriculture, and schools, and controlled by the land-owning nobles and the governors. Semstvo and Mir and Assemblies of the Noblesse became ornamental trimmings to the colossal edifice of the bureaucracy.

The assembling of all the functions of government into the hands of the executive became again the guiding principle of this system. "The Council of State," whose office was that of discussing the budget and law-making proposals, was the simulacrum of a parliament. The Senate, which gave decision on special points appealed from the lower courts, and whose promulgation of all enactments was the hall-mark of their legality, was a form of supreme court. But both hung from above rather than rested on a substructure. They were substantially cut off from popular influences, their function was secondary action following origin in the executive bureaus. The Imperial Autocrat, deriving his right from Divinity alone, exercised, in addition to his executive functions and his duties as supreme commander of the armed forces of the State, those powers which by a segregation of functions would have fallen to the legislative bodies and

the judiciary. In this, the ten ministries were his main agencies.

Under this system, legislation was inaugurated through the presentation of a project to the Czar by one of his ministers, or by outside petition, or perhaps by the imperial wish.

The proposed enactment, if the Czar ordered it to be further examined, was referred usually to an Imperial Commission of Study. Debates followed in the Advisory Council of State, and the completed bill, as framed by this body, was signed by the Emperor and became a ukase, to be formally promulgated by the Senate and enrolled as part of the law of the land. Interpretations of law were made by the Ministers, which none might gainsay. Thus was the legislative function absolute.

In the provinces the three functions of government were equally centralized. A governor (almost invariably a general or an admiral) through his subordinate executive officers duplicated in microcosm the system of the capital. The dependent Semstvo was his Council of State, the dependent judges composed his Senate, the dependent Semski Natschalniki, his executive ministers. Into his bureaux came the details of provincial government save such matters as the villagers settled in their own Mirs. The troops of the district were at his call, the gendarmerie under his orders carried out the judicial arrests and the drumhead condemnations that sent so many thousands along the road to Siberia.



In the placing of these proconsuls and their sustaining soldiery was applied the Roman rule, "Divide et impera." The head officials of the provinces were from distant parts, — the Governor of Warsaw from Tiflis, the Governor of Odessa from Samara, the Governor of the Amur from the Baltic. The Orthodox Cossacks of the Don were in force among the troubled Poles and Jews of the western governments; the drafts from the peasantry of Little Russia garrisoned Tiflis and Turkestan, and Siberian regiments watched the Austrian frontier. Even the popes sent to petty village congregations were generally of far-off origin.

Though power was thus alienated from the people, the bureaucracy, by other agencies rooted deep in human nature, had twined itself around the daily life of society.

Every ambitious man in his profession, as he succeeded, was marked for promotion. Not only to office-holders and soldiers, but to everybody, throughout the whole social fabric, were "chins" or graded ranks given. Here for example is a selection from one of the lists of the Czar's Christmas announcements: —

Appointed members of the Council of State: Privy Councilor Kabyliniski, and Von Kaufman, Senator, Minister of Public Instruction, President of the Supreme Court.

Decorated with the St. Stanislaus Order, First Class: Major-General Hippolyt Grigerasch, Director of the

## 288 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

Department of Physics and Electro-technology at the Nicholas Engineer Academy and School.

Decorated with the St. Vladimir Order of the Third Class: Major-General Michael Hahnenfeldt, on the staff of his Imperial Highness the Supreme Commander of Guards in the St. Petersburg Military District.

Valentin Magorski, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Chief of the Veterinary Staff.

Alexander Pomeranzev, Professor of Architecture.

Dimitri Sassiadke, Governor of Radom.

Michael Mardarjev, Censor of Foreign Papers and Journals.

Advanced to the ranking Chin of actual State Councilor, hereditary "honorable citizen" Constantine Popov, founder and director of the Tea Emporiums.

Raised into hereditary "honorable citizenship" of the 3d gild, the Archangel merchant Emil Brautigam.

Given personal "honorable citizenship," Vladimir Ritimoun, Proprietor of the Wollner Typographical Establishment; Karl Volter, Captain of the steamer *Emperor Nicholas II*, of the Riga Navigation Co.

When a professor from his books was called up before the highest provincial dignitary to have pinned on his lapel for honorable service to the Empire the Order of St. Stanislaus, it was hard for him not to have a warm sentiment for those who had so signally recognized his talents. When on the document which recorded the promotion of a royal prince to a colonelcy was enrolled the name of a tradesman; when a neighboring doctor was raised his step in civil rank, each felt the touchstone. All

who had served well in their respective positions might hope to be on the honor list, and this was the most effective tribute to the weakness, the worth, and the ambition of human nature.

In Russia, as in France under Napoleon's iron yoke, there was a welcome to every sort of ability, and its elevation to posts of the highest trust. The aristocracy sought for was one of power, not that of a small birth-caste. A fundamental democracy ran through society. Save for a few of the Guards regiments, the army was officered by poor men. The Cossacks' officers were chosen from among their own people and were state-trained. In the knapsack of every soldier was Skobelov's baton; in the desk of every chinovnik, Witte's portfolio.

So stood the bureaucratic edifice, complete in itself. Here and there a popular embellishment was added, perhaps to strengthen, often to conceal; but in grim reality it formed no part of the structure. Thus the Russian Empire finished out the nineteenth century. With the twentieth the system had come to trial for its stewardship.

In the great reckoning are elements both of good and of evil. The liberation of the serfs and all that went with the emancipation stand as a credit. It is a further vast credit that Russia has made, held together, and civilized an empire of over eight and a half million square miles, with a population of over one hundred and forty million souls; that to the internal development of her splendid resources



the Government has vigorously set its hand, seeking for her rivers unhampered navigation, for her canals larger passage, for her deserts great irrigation works. Already the Siberian Railway links the Baltic and Pacific; already on the southeast the tracks creep to the threshold of Kashmir, where some four hundred miles separate the Russian lines from those of British India. This gap once crossed, Calcutta becomes but eleven days distant from London. It is still another credit that, despite Slavic limitations and financial loss, in the face of Western invention and competitive leveling, the country of the cheapest telegraph and the cheapest railway rate was until recently not America but Russia. It is a credit that the public land has been put so efficiently and generously at the disposal of the people, that any emigrant expressing a genuine purpose of settling will be given, wherever he may select it in Siberia, a liberal homestead, and he will be conveyed to it over the Trans-Siberian Railway for a sum less than the cost. He is not only allotted his homestead, but he is supplied with seed, grain, tools, and advances for his first years of marketing.

It is again a credit that the governmental attitude to the industrial classes has not been one of oppression. True, work-hours are unrighteously long and certain strikes have been put down arbitrarily. Still the Russian labor laws and arrangements for the settlement of labor difficulties are in many features conspicuously statesmanlike and just. Some

years since, a body of Belgian miners, fifty or more, with their families, were transferred from the collieries of the Meuse to the Donetz Basin. Recently these miners, at a meeting of the directors' board, presented a memorial to this purport: "How happy are we who are no more in Belgium, but who live and work in Russia! No longer must we support the socialistic committee. On the day of pay we put our hands in our pockets and have it for our wives and children."

The other side of the ledger is, however, not without weighty items. While no system of government can legislate prosperity, the public welfare is rightfully the first test, as it should be the first consideration, of an administration. Despite her immense territories, her vast mineral deposits, her fertile soils, her navigable rivers, her abundant timber, all the natural sources of national wealth, Russia is very poor. The peasants have more than doubled in number since the allotment of communal fields that followed the emancipation, and they are in general want. Vast stretches, whole provinces, are subject to periodic famine. Millions of the people are constantly on the brink of starvation. Manufacturing is, as a rule, desultory, undeveloped, and, in general, unprofitable.

The per-capita wealth of Russia is estimated at but two hundred and seventy-five dollars, as compared to Germany's seven hundred dollars, France's eleven hundred and twenty dollars, and England's

twelve hundred and thirty-five dollars. The savings-bank deposits reported for all Russia average but \$2.75 per man, while in France they average \$20.82, in England \$15.00, and in Austria \$15.68.

The degree of administrative responsibility for this condition is of course not to be definitely laid down. Much manifestly is due to natural conditions, national character, and historic handicaps; and some of the resultants would be the same under any administrative policy. Russia in her great area has had a sparse population. She has not, like her sister nations, and preëminently America, been able to lay the rest of the world under teeming contribution to her citizenship. She has had only her natural increase, and no such record as that of the United States has been possible. The Slav is not commercial, but agricultural. He has remained poor, and has had relatively very small resources to devote to what have proved our two greatest developing forces — internal improvement and education.

It is, however, a matter directly involved in government that, with this low standard of national living, there is the correlated fact of extremely high national expenditure. An immense budget of two billion roubles, ordinary expenditure, is annually met, which the war-loans raised to a total, for some years, of over three billions.

It is the general belief that a large part of the public funds is frittered away in needless waste, with multitudes of idling clerks and sinecure officials.





DRAGOON



CONSTABLE

RUSSIAN TYPES



Granting the benefit of doubt, assuming that the Administration's corruption and inefficiency are exaggerated, and supposing that the public money is in the main honestly and productively spent, it is still a very serious question if any public service rendered by the agents of Government can correspond to or justify the immense burden of taxation heaped upon a people whose economic distress is so terrible.

The weight of the tax-levy crushing the peasants, whose improvident habits aggravate their want, is, for most, unescapable unless they follow the emigrant's road to Siberia. The rate-gatherer can take anything the mujik has, save his last coat, his last horse, his seed-grain for next year. He is, with fateful frequency, forced to hire himself out to whoever will use his services, and this during the brief summer season which is so supremely essential if he is to attend to his own crops and fields. One landowner relates that he has seen paid an average of five roubles (\$2.50) a month for farm-laborers, including men, women, and children, during June, July, and August.

Under the old system the method of rate-levy on the "souls" in a family weighed inequitably. Census revision was delayed in one instance, personally related, by over twenty-three years. A family taxed, twenty-three years before, on a father, four brothers, and two adult sons, — seven souls, — was still assessed for seven males, whether the



family had increased to twenty, or been reduced to one. Each member of the household was responsible for the total.

It is related that whole families in Samara, reduced by the fearful cholera epidemic of some years back from scores of men to a dozen or ten, had to leave their home-country for Siberia to escape the load of their dead brothers.

Discussing the economic loss of the years of military service, one of the country nobles related an incident. He told of ordering the dead leaves and branches cleared out of his lake. Ordinarily, he said, he did not go near the work or let the peasants come near his château, for there was a good deal of class-hostility where he lives. But he was interested in the lake because the branches were killing some specially cherished fish, so he went down through the woods and was surprised to see nobody working. All the men were crowded round a peasant whom he had cited as an example of those who, though unlettered, had great capacity. This man had served seven years in the navy and could neither read nor write, a commentary upon what the service training was. He was declaiming on politics, and the squire stepped behind a tree, for the peasant spoke musically and well. The man was telling about his naval service: "Seven years on the boats I have been, brothers, and every three months I got ninety kopecks to buy a string for the crucifix and to cut my hair. I had no money for tobacco, none

to send home to my wife in all this time, and I came home without a kopeck. Seven years of my life I have given to the Czar. What has he given me? What has he given you?" The landowner stepped from behind the tree and faced the group of startled peasants. "You have heard, your honor? Well it is true, it is true!"

The measure which under existing land-conditions would most directly raise the standard of life is the improvement of the mediæval agricultural system, and this depends upon the intelligence of the people at large. Scientific farming needs technical knowledge, yet of the great sums collected, a very small portion goes to education. The Nation spends for it but forty-three million roubles, the Semstvos but twenty million roubles, or together one eighth of the military budget.

A tedious, inefficient course in Slavonic, with the prayer-books as text, a smattering of modern Russian, sometimes mathematics as far as multiplication and division, — this is the state education of the privileged few of the peasants' children. Whatever small amount of real knowledge is gained is quickly submerged in the ocean of ignorance at home. The percentage of illiteracy is very great. The record gives Switzerland five, Germany seven, Great Britain ten, France fifteen, Russia eighty-four.

It is argued that for the bulk of the population, under existing material conditions, schools are of

small use. The lack, in the general poverty, of the very primary materials, — paper, pencils, books; of proper shoes and clothes; the unsuitableness of the houses of the peasants as places for the children to prepare their lessons in, with no spot to put their books or to do their tasks and with no available light — all these things strike at the very root of education. The population must be raised economically to the point where the elementals of existence are assured, before the incidental costs of schools can be met by the peasantry. However, there has been coming to Russia during the last generation, in a great wave, the kind of education that made the American West — the education of expansion, of the founding of towns, the planting of new industries, the building of new railroads, the opening of better navigation-routes, the enlistment of foreign capital; all the intelligence and enlightenment that attends a real industrial, commercial, and material quickening.

Beyond these social and economic factors a large count is set against the bureaucratic system for the conduct of administration. The suppression of personal liberty, of freedom of speech, the abuse of power by arbitrary officials, remorseless repression, ruthlessly carried out, racial oppression, frightful cruelty in the prisons and exile stations; — it is a terrible indictment that has been drawn. The close of the Japanese War opened a new "Smutnoe Vremya," or time of trouble. Industrial wars, riots



in Baku, uprisings in the Caucasus, seizure of cities by Social Democrats,—so went the disturbances throughout Russia, the white terror above grappling with the red terror beneath.

The situation which the forces of order were required to meet was extraordinary. The balance-wheel of the human mind, and all sense of proportion among classes of the people, seemed at times to be lost. Barbaric as the administration condemnations undoubtedly were, the individuals were not infrequently innocent only by curious standards. In a broad view one must confess that on both sides were rights and wrongs. The system, far more than individuals, was at fault. But while a system so linked to violence and oppression could not longer be suffered, the way out could not come through yielding to men in insurrection.

Salvation lay along the path that the Emperor opened. His rescript of October 17, 1905, proclaimed a National Duma.

The pregnant clauses in the summons to a national legislature were these:—

We direct the Government to carry out our inflexible will in the following manner:—

1. To grant the population the immutable foundation of civic liberty based on real inviolability of the person and freedom of conscience, speech, union, and association.

2. To call to participation in the Duma those classes of the population now completely deprived of electoral rights.

3. To establish it as an immutable rule that no law can come into force without the approval of the State Duma.

The ebullition of sentiment that followed these decrees was extraordinary. All the bitterness and discontent that had weltered through the years of distress were metamorphosed into a glowing hope. Ambition and aspiration became a fervor. The delirium went electrically through all classes during the few following weeks of uncensored press and unfettered meetings. The educated were fed with every sort of essay upon what would be the result of the new order, and exhortation to keep spread the young wings for national ascension. Among the unlettered peasants, pictures circulated showing glorified cartoons of the risen Russia. One of the most widely distributed of these celebrated the Imperial Svoboda Manifesto. The genius of the Slav stood forth: one hand rested on a tablet marked "Zakon" (Law), the other unfurled a banner inscribed in blazing red letters, "Svoboda" (Liberty), below which followed freedom of speech, of forming associations, of holding meetings, of religion, the inviolability of the home, and amnesty for political prisoners. Peasants and workmen were grouped around, and above them stood an heroic figure representing the Duma which was to halo all national activity with law. The rising sun, illumining the Tauride Palace, cast its glow and glamour over the prophecy.

The ukase had gone forth to give the widest re-

presentation at the polls. The command was followed out in a system by which every class had its own deputies in the nominating colleges that elected the Duma members. Among the peasantry each *volost* had two deputies; every thousand industrials had one, the nobility, the salaried clerks, the bourgeois in the cities, the Cossack stanitzas, the boards of trade, the universities, the Holy Synod, the aboriginal Buriat tribesmen, — each had special representation. Uninterfered with for the most part by officialdom, all Russia crowded to the polls, every man believing that his ideal was now, at last, on the eve of realization. The peasants who called for land, the workmen who wished for higher wages, the Intellectuals with their slogan of universal education, the submerged races with dreams of reborn nationalities, the ambitious with visions of power, the venal with hopes of plunder, each and all thought their hopes were to spring at once into the actual and the visual.

In such a fever-time the men to whom official service meant the slow toilsome improvement of conditions by self-sacrificing devotion to the routine of administration, who could offer as pre-nomination pledges only earnest study and conscientious action on the legal matters presented, were passed by in the hot aspiring canvass for delegates. Those who believed all things and promised all things, whose fervency of expectation fed the universal hope, whose preaching held that, the way once cleared, Russia



could at a bound reach the plane to which other countries had so long and toilsomely struggled, those of fiery faith which would consume every obstacle — these were the men whom the people ratified and whom the nation sent to St. Petersburg for the first Duma.

It was a band of hot heads and eager hearts that assembled, echoing their constituents' desires, crying for all things and at once. They were saturated with the history of the French Revolution, they felt confident that their coming meant the end of the old régime, and belief in their own power was the pledge of the future. Their first official act threw down the gauntlet to autocracy. In the reply to the Crown, passed during their first day's session, the final paragraphs read: —

The most numerous part of the population, the hard-working peasants, impatiently await the satisfaction of their acute want of land; and the first Russian State Duma would be recreant in its duty were it to fail to establish a law to meet this primary want by resorting to the use of lands belonging to the State, the Crown, the Royal family, all monastic and state lands, also private landed property, on the principles of eminent domain.

The spiritual union of Russia's different nationalities is possible only by meeting the needs of each one of them, and by preserving and developing their national characteristics. The Duma will try to satisfy these wants.

Sirs, the Duma expects of you full political amnesty, as the first pledge of mutual understanding and mutual agreement between the Czar and his people.

It was apparent that if these clauses did not contemplate the confiscation of private property, which was openly advocated by the peasant deputies, and the substitution of a "spiritual union" of Russia's subsidiary peoples for the real hegemony, there was fair *prima-facie* evidence for thinking that they did. While a general amnesty would render less than justice to a large number of citizens, it would cover as well the bomb-shell anarchists, whose imprisonment was as necessary to the protection of society as that of any other dangerous criminals. The tenor of these demands, the speeches of the deputies, and the avowed desires of their majority, brought matters to a crisis. Not alone the autocracy, but national unity, and the jurisdiction of the courts, were called openly and violently into question. When such a challenge is offered a government, it must answer or abdicate.

Unostentatiously, the Imperial Administration poured troops into St. Petersburg from Kronstadt and the northern garrisons. The governors at Moscow, Odessa, Warsaw, and the big industrial centres were notified to concentrate their loyal regiments. The whole country was mapped out like a checker-board. It was now only a question of when the authorities would act.

On the night of July 8, the troops in St. Petersburg were called to arms. They marched with machine-like precision to appointed stations throughout the city. With the dawn every strategic point

was held by the soldiery, and a battalion ringed about the deserted Duma hall. In the silence was read the imperial rescript. The first Duma had ceased to exist.

The dissolution of this national parliament had come as a stroke of lightning. The venerable representative Petrunkevitch told how he was awakened at five in the morning with the news that the city was under martial law and that soldiers with fixed bayonets were at the Duma doors. Hurried consultations were held with groups of colleagues, and finally the word was passed to meet at Viborg in Finland. At the little inn there, the pressing crowd of one hundred and sixty-nine fugitive deputies signed their manifesto. It called for the cessation of tax-payments, the refusal of conscription, and reclaimed the freedom of Russia. But the insurrection, the uprising in their support! Not a regiment came to assist them, not a city rallied to their call, not a Mir responded. For a few weeks the signers were free. Then the police took them, one by one.

Dully unprotesting, the public received the news of the dissolution of the Duma and the arrest of the deputies. The majority of Russians did not want disunion, did not want the overthrow of vested rights. Each wanted some specialty of his own. Yet here was the resultant of each constituency's crystallized desires. The people had accepted the leadership of those who had held out great hopes,





THE TVERSKAIA GATE



LOUBIANSKAIA PLACE

STREET SCENES IN MOSCOW



impotently. The Government had crushed the men whose power meant social and economic, as well as administrative, revolution. In the blow it had perforce shattered the dreams as well.

Humiliated by the contemptuous condemnation of their chosen representatives, bitterly disillusioned, the people at large stolidly acquiesced in the extinction.

The voting for the second Duma, which followed some months later, was almost perfunctory. Those who had chronically wished to agitate, and those put forward by the Administration in an effort to pack the membership, composed the bulk of the deputies. Moderates, hopeful of progress with order, stayed at home, disgusted with both sides. The result was a second violent, wrangling Duma, offending like the first, and in its turn ignominiously snuffed out.

The year 1907 saw universal disappointment, cynicism, and skepticism. In the literature, the lassitude of the nation was shown, and morbid despair reflected the thwarted hopes, the agonies, the confusion of the people. The bitterness in the *Lazarus* of Andreyev, the decadence in the *Sanin* of Artzybashev, mirrored the people's mood, and the shadow of a dark destiny brooded over all. To fill the cup, the reaction, coldly triumphant, was able to bring the members of the first national parliament before the bar for high treason in signing the Viborg Manifesto.



In the stifling Hall of Justice in St. Petersburg, like a resurrection of the first Duma, sat the hundred and sixty-nine signers, grouped as of old by party affiliations. Each man was called upon to justify his actions. Many had signed the Viborg document in the belief that the people would rise in bloody rebellion, and they issued what was, to their fevered view, advice of moderation. One deputy after another stood erect to answer for his deeds. If the men had been carried from liberty into license, at least they had been fired by intense belief in themselves and in their mission. Impressive were the solemn declarations of those who expected nothing less than long imprisonment for speaking out, now, a defiance to the ruling power. It was currently rumored that should the former President of the Duma, Dolgoroukov, justify his action, his penalty was to be three years' imprisonment; the others would serve one; while liberty was reported to be the bribe for any who would confess a fault. Yet almost to a man these old deputies rose to declare that they still stood by all that they had done.

"I did not care, and do not care if our action was unconstitutional. We found that we must rely," said Nabokov, "on the highest law, the will of the people."

Kakoshtin, of the Cadet Party, and a professor in Moscow University, declared: "Whatever fate awaits us, it will be nothing compared to the suf-

ferings of our predecessors who have fallen in the fight for liberty."

Three members of the "Group of Toil" declared that the first Duma would be an encouragement to the people to overthrow the present system.

Mourontzev, and Prince Dolgoroukov were there, leading members of the first Duma. Petrunkevitch ended his speech: "If you open for us the doors of the prison, we will quietly enter with the knowledge that we have fulfilled a duty to the Fatherland."

Burning words these, but they waked not an echo. The Administration was in complete control of the situation. Repression was the order of the day, repression as widespread and efficient as in the days of Nicholas I; the autocracy, buttressed by an army which, however lacking in discipline and supposedly honeycombed by disaffection, nevertheless rallied still to the command and service of the master.

At this time there was issued the call for a third Duma. As Prime Minister sat cold Stolypin, whose reputation as a governor-general was the reverse of liberal. He had risen by virtue of rigid efficiency. His best friends did not know his beliefs. He had dissolved both the first and second assemblies, and had done his best to pack the third. "I want a Duma that will work, not talk," he declared.

The murmurers said that the Russian Parliament had become a farce; that the administrative officers were following to the best of their ability instructions from St. Petersburg to deliver a roster of safe

men; that those who had agitated unwisely were being removed from the likelihood of candidature; that the Senate, with its membership of retired officials, had so construed each provision of the election law that the unquiet classes were as far as possible disfranchised; that every influence was being used to make the third a "dummy Duma," hopelessly manipulated into the reactionary camp.

Throughout this time of shattered ideals and discouragement, a very small band of real believers still held high the torch of faith. Most prominent among them was Alexander Goutchkov, he who among the Moscow Constitutional Democrats (the "Cadets" of the earlier times) had in a critical Polish debate of the party spoken and voted alone for a united Russia.

When at length the third Duma had assembled, the so-called Octobrists or Moderates, who had a small plurality, prepared a reply to the Speech from the Throne. Very respectful it was, with no demand for general amnesty or suggestions of confiscation or national devolution. It read in part: —

We wish to devote all our ability, knowledge, and experience to strengthening the form of government which was given new life by the Imperial will; to pacify the Fatherland, to assure respect for the laws, to be a buttress for the greatness and power of indivisible Russia.

Unexceptionable, this, to the higher powers, save that in the preamble in the original draft, the Czar's



historic title of "Autocrat" had not been given him. A debate followed, and brought about the declarations which defined the parties of the third Duma. Bishop Mitrophan, of the Right, or reactionary party, rose. He said in the name of his group that the Address to the Throne must contain the phrase "Autocrat of all the Russias." Lawyer Plevako seconded, threatening to secede if the proper title were not incorporated. Paul Milyoukov spoke hotly for the opposing Cadets, asking whether the country was or was not under a constitution. He declared the new election law to be contrary to the original ukase and an act of force. Others of the Left, among them orator Maklakov of the Cadets, declaimed against the election law by which this Duma was constituted. They were not politic, these spokesmen, but harsh and dogmatic, yielding none of the courtier-respect that makes up for so much absence of real yielding. For the Octobrists, Alexander Goutchkov led the debate. His speech revealed that they operated, not with the bludgeon, but with the Damascus blade. They were of flexible obstinacy and opportunism, stirring up no sleeping dogs, bending to rise again. Goutchkov slipped adroitly into his speech the disputed word constitution, thus: "We do not believe that the Czar's power has been diminished. The Emperor has become free, for the Constitution has delivered him from court camarillas and the hierarchy of chinovniks." Thanks largely to his tact, the Octo-

brists won. The Address, without "Autocrat," was passed by a vote of two to one. But it passed at the cost of self-separation by the right wing of the reactionaries, who withdrew.

The answer of the Administration came sharply from Prime Minister Stolypin: —

The manifesto of imperial power has borne witness at all times to the people that the autocratic power, created by history and the free will of the monarch, constitutes the most precious benefit of the political state of Russia; for it is this power and this free will that are alone capable, as the tutelary source of existing constitutions, of saving Russia in times of trouble, of guaranteeing the state from the dangers that threaten it, and of bringing back the country to the way of order and historic truth.

He called upon the Chamber to incorporate the recognition of the "Autocracy."

A hundred members protested. Many of the Cadets walked out. To the Octobrists, barely a quorum, fell the humiliating duty of recalling their own address and of inserting, despite the scorn, the fateful word. So shaken was the group itself by the conflict that of its one hundred and sixty members but ninety-five united in the caucus that elected officers and committee members. Alexander Goutchkov was chosen chairman, Baron Meyendorf, Priest Bjeloussov, and Radsjauko, officers. Among the heads of committees were Prince Wollanski, and Peasant Kusovkov. In spite of the stigma of reac-

tion popularly imposed upon them, these were not unrepresentative men.

The distracted Duma got slowly under way, and the Prime Minister brought before them his proposed policy of administration.

M. Stolypin's address to the Duma, November 16, 1907, stated that:—

1. The destructive movements of the party of the extreme Left have resulted in brigandage and anarchy. Order will be the first duty of the Government.

2. Agrarian relief is the first necessity, and this by a system of small proprietors.

3. Local self-government and administrative reforms will be formulated and presented to the Duma.

Business got centred on these practical subjects. Discussions as to whether or not there was an autocracy gave place to famine-relief measures and railway-rate studies. The absenting delegates of the Left and Right, who had retreated to their tents in the wrangle over the Czar's titles, and had left the forlorn little band of constructive Octobrists to carry on the work of legislation, now returned. The proceedings began to take parliamentary form.

The Budget came on, the Ministers of the Government presenting their projects for discussion. In the heat of debate, the Minister of Finance, M. Kakovtsev, exclaimed, "Thank God, we have no parliament yet!" The fact that an Imperial Minister was presenting his budget to an elected assem-



bly showed the reality, but the war on names rose up afresh. The Duma officially declared the Minister's expression unfortunate. He threatened to resign unless the house apologized. The Left again exploded in outcries, called out that the Duma was a farce, threw in their votes as more fuel for the flame of discord, and deserted the hall when they were in the minority. Still the little band of moderates chose the self-abnegating, unspectacular part, and gave the apology that avoided a crisis.

But now came up a matter wherein the dispute was not over a name or a title, but a reality. The Government, upheld by the Czar, the Court, and much public sympathy, proposed a programme for a new navy. It called for the immediate allocation of one hundred and eleven million roubles, and the expenditure in ten years, of over a billion roubles. In the state of the country this entailed a fearful burden, perhaps the loss of the gold standard. The outwardly supine members, in rows like grenadiers, voted against the project. By 194 to 78 it was lost.

The Minister of Finance shortly afterwards undertook to issue railway bonds without the Duma's consent. With a rebuke, for which this time no apology was asked or given, his estimate was cut down by one rouble, and voted. The Amur Railway was authorized, though three hundred million roubles are its prospective toll. The sole remaining Pacific port of Russia, Vladivostok, is thereby

linked with the Irkutsk and Trans-Baikal districts of Siberia, and so doubly insured against an eastern enemy.

After a lengthy session the third Duma adjourned, but not by violence. It could show as results two hundred bills passed, a budget thoroughly scrutinized and ratified, and much faithful work in committee. More important still, the Parliament, by forbearance and patience, had made itself a part of the machinery of government, and had shown that a national legislature did not mean expropriation, and a partitioned Russia.

At the end, fiery Maklakov of the Cadets, he who early in the session had cried out that all was a farce, admitted that "the third Duma has lost none of its rights, it is systematically extending them." All honor to those whose self-suppression and patience won.

The thin edge of the wedge had been driven in under absolutism by the third Duma, but little could one foresee that a half-dozen quiet blows would, during the fourth Duma's session, bring autocracy to the greatest crisis it has encountered since it decreed a legislature. The heart of the situation lies in a naval bill submitting to the Duma matters which the Constitution reserves to the control of the Emperor. Strangely, too, the Czar is himself the abettor, if not the originator, of the supplanting.

In May, 1906, the Czar decided to create the

"Naval General Staff." One hundred thousand roubles a year were needed, and the money must be sought of the Duma. The first two assemblies being so violent, the measure lay in abeyance, to the great injury of the service. Since the regeneration of the navy was one of the measures made painfully necessary by the Japanese War, M. Stolypin had a bill drafted, in three clauses: one ratifying the creation of the "Naval General Staff," a second furnishing an annual sum for its operation, a third supplying a fund for contingencies. No feature of the creation, save the financial aspect, came at all within the legal jurisdiction of the Duma. Yet the Premier had the organization itself brought before the Assembly.

The deputies criticised the institution, modified it, sliced the estimates. Assuming the judicial functions of a court of last appeal, they voted the money and passed the bill, which M. Stolypin then submitted to the upper chamber. In view of the overstepping of domain, the bill was, after a lucid exposition of the law by the ex-Controller-General, thrown out.

The matter was next submitted to the Czar himself, who authorized its reintroduction in the Duma. A second time the measure was passed and sent to the Council. M. Durnovo, ex-Minister, ablest of the Conservatives, and candidate for the Premiership, made a notable speech. He proved clearly the trespass upon the rights reserved to the Crown,



showed that such precedents would build up an artificial claim which could not later be combated, while the allowance of participation in one instance gave a warrant for demanding interference in any and every proposal. The bill was a blow at the very heart of monarchical government, and a degree of democracy not allowed even in republican France. But, defiantly, M. Stolypin held his ground. The anomaly was presented of Conservatives decrying the Premier for undermining the dynasty, with the Emperor himself supporting the culprit. Thus has the former government minority been converted into a majority, — the measure passed by the small margin of twelve.

The reactionaries have bitter feud with this Premier. He has, it is allowed, so enlarged the functions of the deputies by handing over to them, one after another, the vital prerogatives of the autocracy, that no later action can ever disestablish the Duma. The Empire is now governed through a unified cabinet; the important prerogative of appointing the governors-general has been exercised by the Premier, rather than by the Czar, since June 16, 1906. Russia has marched far on its upward way.

Great, however, is the task ahead. Of all that the Duma can achieve the country has supreme need. The agrarian question calls aloud for solution, and the peasants' future depends on land-relief. The Emperor has given instructions for the sale of most

of the Crown domains and those of the Imperial Family. The nobles are being encouraged to sell to the tenants, on notes guaranteed by the Imperial land bank. Firm and able hands must guide this improvement, promoting the division of estates left to run wild, but avoiding the pitfalls of threatened property-rights.

Individual enterprise must be awakened, which will in the end bring about more scientific rotation and intensive farming. The old system leaves fallow thirty-three per cent of the arable land — an area equal to the whole ploughed acreage of the United States. In western Europe but seven per cent is fallow, and the value of the harvest per acre in Russia is less than a third that of Germany. The policy adopted in the Agrarian Law of November 9, 1906, for the gradual breaking-up of the communistic *Mirs*, and the division of the common lands, at the villagers' option, into freehold plots, is a wise one. In 1907, the year following the law's promulgation, 2617 peasants, in the government of Ekaterinoslav had become individual proprietors. Under the Land Act of 1909 one million farms had been taken up for private ownership in the first six months of the law's operation.

Emigration to the vast untilled fields of Siberia should be carried on with all the efficiency of which the Government is capable. That this is in progress, the figure of four hundred and ninety-one thousand emigrants for the first seven months of

1908 attests. Fifty-nine thousand homeseekers were sent by villages which wished to emigrate thither *en masse*. But care and providence must follow the movement, and insure that the settlers are equipped with the means for safe and permanent establishment.

The race-question calls also for a righteous solution. The future must bring the repeal of the old bureaucratic laws of Jewish exclusion, and end the vicious circle of oppression and terrorism against this much wronged people. The chaotic finances of the Empire must be regulated by years of patient work, such as that of the last Duma, through whose agency there is now, for the first time in twenty-two years, a budget surplus.

The Duma members, to whom these all-important tasks fall, must plough the fields in all their armor. The autocracy is not their greatest enemy. The history of parliamentary government demonstrates again and again that in an ordered community authority gradually reverts to the national representative assembly. Little by little power slips away from the throne. In England, in 1686, the reign of James II could show Jeffreys' Bloody Assizes; yet five years later the Parliament was in full and permanent control of the government.

The preservation of the country from the nether chaos is, however, a mightier problem. Before the ship of state rides safe in the harbor of true representative government there must come a critical



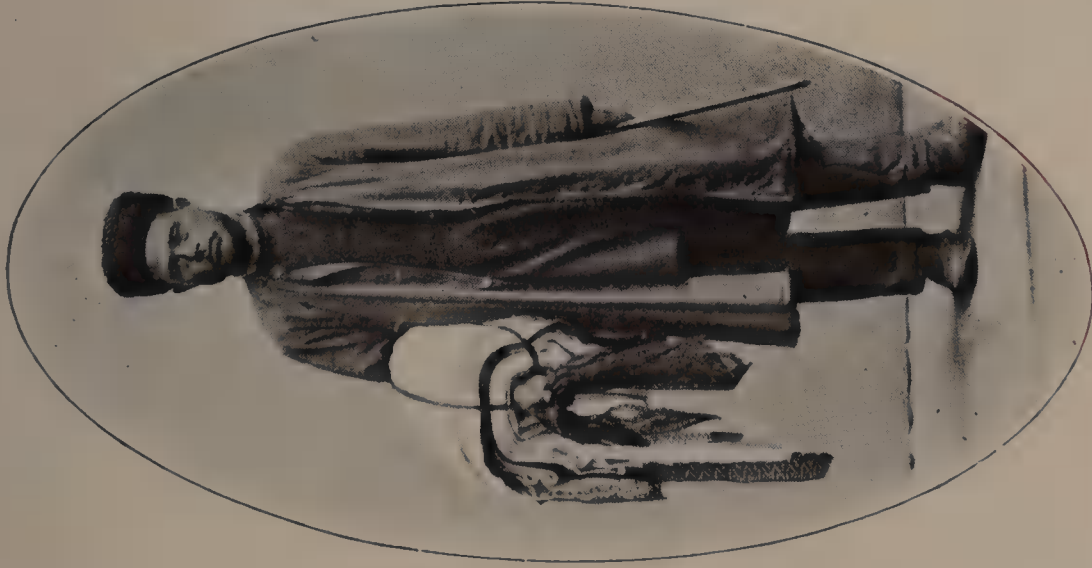
period when the administrative powers are not firmly clasped by the hand of either autocracy or duma. This hiatus-time, when iron repression ceases and sober self-rule begins, is yet to come. Those who must tide the nation over it are such as those pathetically few Octobrists, unpopular because of their bending, craven-seeming policy, and because of the unfree elections that gave them place. Will such a group, when the crucial hour strikes, be allowed peaceably to pilot the vessel? Or will red-handed revolution wrench from their grip the tiller, bereft of the guidance of autocracy? Is it to be evolution or revolution?

One cannot deny that a free election to-day would throw out the toiling Octobrists and put in a membership like that of the first Duma. These constructive, unvisionary men are not loved, nor is their progress likely to make them so. They exist as the ruling factor only by virtue of election manipulations and legal interpretations. With this essentially temporary support taken away, the group would be powerless, for every indication shows that the people would not support them or their policies.

Even Moscow, their former stronghold, fell away in the 1909 elections. There is throughout the country an undercurrent of fierce demand for an immediate millennium, with Liberty as the guiding grace and some particular party as its escort. A song that has become almost an anthem, "Spurn with us that



POLICEMAN



PEDDLER

RUSSIAN TYPES





ancient tyrant," chanted softly by the school-boys to the tune of the *Marseillaise*, — this tells the tale of what is in the air, and in the blood of the people. The most poorly-suppressed desire is insatiate to hack away with one blow the abuses that have, through the centuries, rooted themselves deep in Russian society. The experience of the various revolutionary and terrorist movements proves that their votaries are capable of daring any death for their creeds, and of swimming to their imaged goal in a sea of blood. Let the conservative Octobrist group once succeed in concentrating power in the Duma, and then let a free election substitute for them such men as were in the first Duma, and the Russian Revolution has become a fact.

It is a commonplace to compare the situation with that of France in 1790. There is, however, one fundamental difference. France possessed a numerous and economically powerful bourgeoisie, from whom political rights had been withheld. This class included many strong men moved to a unity of political desire. They were able in the first place to work up into a place of dominance. After the interval of supplanting terrorism, they retook by their own efforts the power which, save for the periods of despotic militarism, they have since maintained. In Russia the conservative middle-class is numerically very weak, and its representatives are unable to seize and hold control themselves. They possess it now only precariously,

by the external propping of weakening absolutism. Will Russia's Octobrists, after performing the function of filching power from the autocracy, meet, at the hands of a new Robespierre, the fate of the high-idealed Gironde?

One cannot yet answer. But whatever the harvest, the work of the third and fourth Dumas, carried out in harmony with the Imperial Ministers, has shown that the last dread arbitrament of social war need not come. Revolution is the final recourse, to be undertaken only if a political and social situation is so desperate that all other means must fail. Such is not the case in Russia. There are administrative abuses there. But governmental restrictions press rather less than one might imagine upon the plain workaday people; and compared to those of other nations, they are not exceptional save in degree. It is the educated and so-called upper classes who complain. Taxes elsewhere than in Russia are burdensome and sure as death. Emigration to Siberia will give any peasant the legal privilege of escaping taxation, which in America is the prerogative of her absentee plutocracy alone. The exile system, dwindling for years past, has now been in effect abolished by the refusal of the Duma to make an appropriation for its continuance. The press-censorship is only the open operation of influences tacitly accepted elsewhere — such as in the United States left the Tweed Ring so long uncriticised. The much-condemned passport is

actually of no more inconvenience than showing a railway ticket, and it does not come within "forty *sagenes*" of the custom-house inquisition which faces every American citizen on his return home.

It is not an error to say that in many matters of individual liberty the Slav enjoys more than the American. In the treatment of subject nations, reliable and neutral witnesses declare that Russia does not approach the rigor of the Prussian bureaucracy in Alsace. Many of the Empire's restrictions are those which obtained throughout Europe fifty years ago — abuses common to a certain stage of civilization, and of public opinion. These melt away in newer customs, for time is curing much. Once the chariot of progress is started, many evils right themselves in the natural and inevitable upward pressure, and many slough off unnoted. It is not so many years back that in America a black man could be deported to malarial lowlands more deadly than Siberia's steppes; not so long ago that the English Parliament passed an act requiring all railway-trains to be preceded by a man carrying a red flag. Like the seignorial rights of Germany's feudal states, anachronisms become outgrown, and fall away.

In Russia, unfortunately, the onslaught against iniquitous human laws is overcarried into a blind charge against Nature's laws, which no revolution can repeal. The protest against dire artificial abuses is mixed with a rebellion against the curse of Adam.



It is the fearful fact of life that the destiny of the majority is anxiety, dependence for daily bread on other men, grinding incessant toil remunerated by a bare livelihood, a barring-back from the fullest personal capacity and possibilities through poverty, parentage, environment, and lack of opportunity. The forces of Nature and primal competition put so many limitations upon every one's action that it is hard to say which are due to the tyranny of men, which are the handicaps born of the nature of things. The cry for deliverance is rising equally in the work-houses of Scotland, in France, where thirty-five per cent of the land is owned by great proprietors, in the slums of New York City, and in the rice-fields of Japan. A government under the present system can but do its best to develop men's capacities, and to give them a fair deal. All that the best of modern societies has succeeded yet in securing to the mass of mankind is the chance to get their sons the education which will enable them to vanquish some of the limitations, security for the person, and protection from robbery of the cruder sort.

Capacity and opportunity can come but by slow degrees. When one sees the numbers and the types in the villages, men of latent capacities undoubtedly, but swamped by the spirit of *nietchevo* and with all their enterprise sapped in the stagnant communism of the Mir, he realizes the futility of a sudden change and the hopelessness of

germinating by political pellet the leaven of progress in the hundred and forty millions.

Rulers may be changed by revolution. But the real quickening of the people to their great future must come and is coming by the slow, sure way of evolution.

## VIII

### THE STORY OF THE HORDES

**A**MONG people so peaceful and subdued as are the latter-day Mongols, it is hard to realize that the race has had a past which in tradition at least goes back to the infancy of history. According to legend, the Chinese, the first reputed offspring of the Mongols, preceded by three hundred years Egypt's earliest dynasty. They antedate Abraham's assigned epoch by twenty-six generations. They claim to have continued before Marathon a longer time than has elapsed from the foundation of Rome to our own era. Yet they yield not even to the Romans preëminence of arms, for they won and ruled an empire in extent and population the greatest that has ever existed. Mongols have led the world's mightiest armies; their hosts have carried the ox-hide banners over every great European state but Spain and England, and into every Asian country except Japan.

That the march of Mongols down the long way of history has been so little appreciated is the sword's obeisance to the pen. Save for the mendacious memoirs of Tamerlane, and a few Ouighour inscriptions in Central Asia, chronicles there are virtually none. So story has found a peg for the clipped tails of



Alcibiades' dogs, but scarcely a word for the deeds of those who won the world from the Yellow Sea to the Baltic, from the Persian Gulf to the Arctic. Only where the annals of the race have been written in the blood of the peoples they conquered are the events to be traced; only by assembling the alien and hostile evidences of the encircling nations can one shape the outline of Mongolia's mighty past. History takes from the Confucian Book of Records the story of the earliest emigration to the east; from Herodotus the descent upon Mesopotamia and the struggle with Persia on the west. It gleans from the Chinese archives the doings of the Hiung-nu — the Huns; from the documents of the Byzantine Empire the descent on Europe of the same Mongolian "Scourge of God." It culls from Arab historiographs the facts of the southern conquests of Genghis Khan; from Russian monasteries the tale of the northward march of his lieutenant Batui.

The outlines of Mongolia's career are patched and gathered from her frontier lands, yet silhouetted against the far recesses of time they grow steadily clearer and more colossal.

In the year given by most as 2852 B.C., a tribe, whose earliest folk-lore and traditions point to an origin in the cradle of the Hordes near Urga, was pushing seaward down the valley of the Yellow River. Like the children of Israel, they were in constant conflict with the "barbarian" aborigines. This tribe became in due time the Chinese nation.

Through fifteen hundred years the descendants of the invaders wrought out a dimly comprehended civilization on the banks of the Hoang-ho. Behind the imposing national legend, hallowed by the mist of centuries and focused by images of their five Hero Kings, one may see the fact of strong, brave rulers striving for their people's advance. A real statesman was the original of the demigod Shin-nung, "holy husbandman," the introducer of agriculture, in whose honor every spring a furrow is ploughed in the soil of his temple courtyard by the Emperor of China. A father in the flesh was that "Nest-builder" who watched the birds construct their homes, and on that model taught his people to make the wattled and plastered huts one sees to-day. The mystic queller of disastrous inundations, Ta-yu, founder of the house of Hia, was the first hydraulic engineer, the dykes of whose successors embank the treacherous Yellow River. He it was who hung at his door a bell which any of his subjects might ring, to obtain immediate attention, and who would leave his rice to answer a call to secure justice. Kie likewise wears human lineaments, he who made a mountain of meat and a tank of wine, and then, to please a frail companion, had his courtiers eat and drink of them on all fours like cows. There is an historic background to the rising against the tyrant under Shang, who later offered himself as a human sacrifice for rain in time of famine, and a kindred note in the story of Chou-siu, sold to misfortunes

by a woman whom he loved and immolating himself in his royal robes when the rebellious vassals were closing in around him.

As the years pass, the histories become clearer and more direct, and the legendary aspect of exploits falls away. The Commentaries of Confucius deal with events as tangible and exact as Luther's Reformation: they give the records of kings, and their daily doings two thousand years before our era.

In 1122 B.C., with Wu-wang of the dynasty of Chu, the Chinese nation emerged as a civilized state. It was organized on a feudal system, not dissimilar to that built up by Japan's powerful Daimios. Under this single dynasty the Celestial Kingdom began a period of 873 years of development, marked by the writings of the great sages. Lao-tse, founder of the Taoist religion, with its watchword of "Tao" (reason), but its quick degeneracy to forms and idol-worship, was the first of the Chinese philosophers in point of time. He was at the zenith of his repute around 530 B.C. He had a young disciple struggling through poverty to an education, "Master Kung," known to us under the Latinized nomenclature of Jesuit missionaries as Confucius.

The youth eagerly conned and meditated upon Lao-tse's abstract speculations; but, unsatisfied, he began the studies and compilations from the ancients which to this day constitute the foundations of Chinese literature, etiquette, religion, ceremonial, and policy of government.



Confucius was at once the world's greatest college professor and its most influential editor. His school instructed three thousand pupils in ethics and etiquette. His writings have influenced more minds than those of any other human individual, and his supremacy is the triumph of uninspired work. His moral tone is lofty, — as witness his "Do not unto another what you would not have done to yourself," — but his life brought no great new message.

"I am a commentator, not an originator," he said of himself.

Mang-tse, "Master Mang," whom we know as Mencius, followed "Master Kung" by one hundred years, applying, as a practical reformer, to the society of the day, the maxims of his enlightened philosophy, rebuking princes and giving to the Chinese world the last of its classics.

In the glories of the Chu Dynasty, China, the earliest offshoot of the Mongol race, reached its literary and philosophic climax.

In Turan, now called Turkestan, and in Mesopotamia, a western division of the Mongols appears about 640 B.C. It is making an incursion into the declining Empire of Assyria, over which Nebuchadnezzar is soon to rule. Nothing of detail remains, only the record of the devastating inroad over the mountain; but it locates at this date the southwestern frontier of Mongol dominion.

Scythia, north of the Black Sea, reveals them

next. The sketch is drawn by the master-pen of the Greek father of history in his description of the expedition of Darius, 506 B.C. "Having neither cities nor forts, they carry their dwellings with them wherever they go," Herodotus writes, describing the nomad foes of the Great King. He relates that they are "accustomed, moreover, one and all of them, to shoot from horseback and to live not by husbandry, but on their cattle."

This was the enemy against whom Darius planned a campaign, whose object was to free from the menace of the Scythians north of the line of advance his prospective expedition for the conquest of Greece. From the bridge of boats over the Hellespont, beside which Miltiades watched, the great Persian marched to the Don River, the nomads always retreating. Darius finally challenged the Scythian king to stand and fight, or to accept him as suzerain. To this message Idonthyrsus replied: "This is my way, Persian. I never fear men or fly from them, nor do I now fly from thee. I only follow my common mode of life in peaceful years. We Scythians have neither towns nor cultivated lands, which might induce us, through fear of being taken or ravaged, to be in any hurry to fight with you. In return for thy calling thyself my lord, I say to thee, 'Go weep!'"

All the Asian steppes were open to the ever-retreating nomads: Darius was obliged to halt. Hereupon, the Scythian prince, understanding how matters stood, dispatched a herald to the Persian

camp with presents for the king. They were "a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows."

Darius was at liberty to deduce whatever explanation he chose. He retreated, the Scythians hounding his army on. He found his bridge over the Bosphorus safe, and returned to Persia to prepare the Athenian expedition that ended at Marathon. The Scythians remained: they were left leading their flocks as of old over the unconquerable steppes.

By these echoes of clashings with other nations, the first-known streams of Mongol outflow are dimly followed to the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea on the south and west, bounding Scythia; to the Hoang-ho Valley, in which were living the metamorphosed Chinese.

But the rolling hills south of Lake Baikal, the source of the race-stream, still poured out fresh hordes, which periodically overflowed in roving nomad bands, harrying the plainsmen. While the feudal states of China struggled and fought among themselves, now coalescing under the "Wu-pa," the five dictators, now uniting under a Prince Hwan of Shan-tung into a temporary Chinese Shogunate, there came down upon the fertile lands and populous cities wild horsemen, sparing none, burning, looting, riding away. "The Hiung-nu descended on us," appears again and again in the history.

At length, about 246 B.C., arose the short but glorious dynasty of Ts'in, under China's king, Shi-



hwang-ti. He was a man of action. He compacted a centralized monarchy from the many princedoms, drove back the nomad Hiung-nu beyond the Yellow River, built the Great Wall, and by his glorious exploits blazoned into Europe's vocabulary, the word China — Ts'in.

In Sz-ma Ts'ien's history, a striking incident, revealing the Great Emperor's limitations, is graphically told.

"Li-se, the councillor, said, 'Of old, the Empire was divided and troubled. There was nobody who could unite it. Therefore did many lords reign at a time. For this, the readers of books speak of old times to cry down these. They encourage the people to forge calumnies. Your subject proposes that all the official histories be burned. The books not proscribed shall be those of medicine, of divination, of agriculture. If any want to study laws, let them take the office-holders as masters.' "

The decree was "approved." The old books of annals, the Confucian Commentaries, the Odes and the Rituals, to the suppressed execration of the learned, fed the flames. The literati who protested were warmed, themselves, over the same fires.

But despite Shi-hwang-ti's signal defeat of the five coalescing tribes, and the eighty-two thousand severed heads; despite the victories in 214 B.C., the Hiung-nu Empire grew in power, until it extended from Corea to Tibet.

The Chinese "Han" Dynasty, even under the

peasant-founder, Lin-pang, who had proven himself a thorough soldier, was constantly harried. The loss of the old literature continued to be mourned, which argues some plane of general appreciation. The Minister urged the recall of the Ts'in philosophers and the reproduction of the burned books.

"Why have books?" said the Emperor. "I won the Empire on horseback."

"Can you keep it on horseback?" the Minister asked.

The literati were eventually recalled. Their support was secured for the throne, and the Hiung-nu were kept back by art as well as by arms.

At the Emperor's death, his widow, the Dowager Empress Lu, of Borgian repute, was still harder pressed by the nomads. Meteh, the khan of the invading hordes outside the Wall, ventured to send to her a proposal of marriage and tariff-treaty couched in Rabelaisian poetry. "I wish to change what I have for what I have not." He followed the verses with gifts of camels and carts and steppe ponies. In return his messengers insisted on a tribute of wadded and silk clothes, precious metals and embroidery, grain and yeast, as well as the intoxicating *samshu*. These royal presents and tribute were really a trading of goods, a barter, and citizens of lower rank, in the fairs beside the Wall, were carrying on an equivalent.

More and more oppressive became the demands of the Mongols. A band of beautiful maidens, a very

toll of the Minotaur, was exacted yearly. In one of the ancient Chinese poems a princess laments the fate that condemns her to a barbarian husband, a desolate land where raw flesh is to be her food, sour milk her drink, and the felt hut her palace.

In 200 B.C., Sin, King of Han, marched against the Hiung-nu, only to retreat after heavy losses, with a third of his soldiers fingerless from the cold. Again, in 177 B.C., the Hiung-nu broke a treaty and raided across the Wall. A speech of the Emperor, in 162 B.C., is quoted in the Chinese chronicles: "These later times for several years the Hiung-nu have come in a crowd to exercise their ravages on our frontiers."

In 141 B.C., Nu-ti, the fifth of the House of Han, assembled a great army of one hundred and forty thousand Chinese, and marched against the Confederacy. This army, like that of Darius, penetrated far up into the nomad's territory. Scarcely a quarter of them returned. But the invasion was not fruitless: the Hiung-nu gave allegiance to China. Later, in 138 B.C., largely to turn the left flank of the Horde, the Chinese advanced into Corea. In 119 B.C. another march to the district north of Tibet turned the nomads' right flank. At length, in 100 A.D., a more northerly Tatar clan, the Sien-pi, came down on the broken remnants of the Hiung-nu. After thirteen hundred years of power this tribe was destroyed. Of the scattered nomads some remained to unite with their victorious conquerors; some went south to Turkestan; a third group trekked north,



## 332 THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA

and went over the great steppe. Subsequent to 100 A.D., they are found on the east bank of the Volga, where during two centuries they temporarily disappear from history.

The great Empire of China now existed unmolested by the Hordes, and after a few hard fights ruled Asia as far as the borders of Persia. Its outposts almost met those of the Empire of Rome. Both realms were, about this date, in peace and prosperity. There is even a record of trade between them, the Chinese annals telling of an expedition of King An-tun, or Antoninus, in 166 A.D., to Burmah, from which his factors reached the Middle Kingdom; and of glass, drugs, metals, and game obtained overland by way of Parthia from Ta-ts'in, the Great Empire. Pliny writes of silk, iron, furs, and skins, caravan-brought from China. So moved the two empires until 376 A.D., when Valens the Irresolute reigned in Byzantium. To him came messengers bringing word of great alarm from the Danube. The whole nation of Goths were on the bank, begging a refuge in Roman territory.

"Wild enemies, from where we know not, are upon us!" they cried.

The Goths, who were to subvert the declining empire, were escaping from before the western division of the old Hiung-nu. Valens had the Goths ferried over the Danube, and the Huns established themselves in the vacated places of what is now Austria.





THE MIRACLE OF ATTILA'S REPULSE

(From a painting by Raphael in Vatican)





Amid those hordes arose a leader destined to leave a memory in the sagas of the Scandinavian bards, in the *Niebelungenlied* of the Teutons, and a lurid trail in the annals of the Cæsars. He called himself a descendant of the great Nimrod, "nurtured in Engaddi, by the grace of God, King of the Huns, the Goths, the Danes, the Medes; the Dread of the World," — Attila.

A profound politician, he alternately cajoled and threatened the peoples whose conquest he undertook; a true barbarian, no food save flesh and milk passed his lips. He and his men worshiped the mysteriously discovered scimitar of Mars, and from Persia to Gaul, from Finland to the walls of Constantinople, his armies ranged. Ambassadors went from his Court to China. The great battle of Châlons, in which, aided by the Goths, the dwindling forces of Rome's Western Empire won their last victory, alone preserved Europe from his yoke. His descendants, mixing with succeeding conquerors, have remained until this day in the land that is called, after their dreaded name, Hungary.

Back to the history of Sz-ma Ts'ien one must return for the next harvest of Mongolia's dragon-teeth. The Tung-hu, whose descendants are now the skin-clad Tunguses that live far to the north, even up to the Arctic Ocean, came down between 309 and 439 A.D. upon Manchuria. This occupation separated China from Corea, which, thus isolated, preserved for centuries the old Han dialect. The

the hill-slopes, waiting to be hammered into spears in the Altai forges; China and Europe were as ripe for the spoiling. All that the Mongols needed was a leader.

In a quaint chronicle of the Middle Ages we read of how he came. When the French took Antioch from the Turks, one Can Can ruled over the northern region out of which the Turks had originally come. To the old kindred in this hour of need they sent for aid. Can Can was of the Cathayans, a people dwelling among the mountains. In one of the valley stretches lived the Tayman tribe, who were Nestorians. After Can Can's death a shepherd, who had risen to power among the Taymans, made himself ruler as King John. King John had a brother named Vut. Beyond his pastures some ten or fifteen days' journey was Mongol; the latter described as a poor and beggarly nation, without governor or law save their soothsayings so detestable to the minds of the Nestorians. Adjoining the Mongols were other poor people called Tatars. When King John died without an heir, Vut became greatly enriched. This aroused naturally the cupidity of his needy neighbors. Among the Mongols was a blacksmith named Cyngis. Ingratiating himself with the Tatars, he pointed out that the lack of a governor left both peoples subject to the oppression of the surrounding tribes. He got himself raised to the double chieftainship, secretly collected an army, and broke suddenly upon Vut. Cyngis sent the Ta-

tars ahead now to open his way, and the people everywhere cried in dismay, "Lo, the Tatars come! the Tatars come!"

While the Turks sought aid of their kinsmen for the defense, the French King sent to King John's reputedly Christian kingdom for help to his crusade. But Cyngis "Temugin," the Man, had come. As Genghis Khan he was to open up the vastest empire the world has ever seen.

In 1200 the young Temugin, in a great battle near Urga, defeated Wang Khan, whom modern research, vindicating the basis of truth in the old Friar William de Rubruquis tales, has shown to have been a Tatar prince of the Nestorian Christian faith, King of the Kitai or Cathayans, in all probability the ruler known to the princes of Europe, through his letters to the Roman Pope, as the Christian potentate of the Orient, Prester John.

Wang Khan's skull, encased in silver, graced the conqueror's tent as a first trophy. In 1206, summoning all the Mongol chiefs, Temugin took the title of Genghis Khan, "The Greatest King."

His armies were turned next to the reduction of his own people, the nomad tribes of the Central Asian plains. As one after another was defeated, its warriors were incorporated into his growing army. When all these myriad shepherds and soldiers were gathered in, he directed his march towards China.

The Great Wall was as paper to his host. Ninety



cities were taken by storm, never one surrendering. For while to the kindred races which he had conquered, and which furnished further recruits for his armies, Genghis was most merciful and humane, to a foreign foe he was indeed the Wrath of God. Once he was bought off from the invasion; but again he returned to the prey. A way into Peking was opened by means of a mine dug under the walls to the centre of the city; through it a picked body of Mongols entered, marched to the gates, and opened them. The savage host rushed in to sack and slay. For sixty days Peking burned, and five desolated provinces of North China were added to the Mongol Empire.

Mohammed, Sultan of Carizme, who reigned from India to the Persian Gulf, was the next objective for the Mongols. In the field, by valor and numbers, the Khan's troops defeated all the Sultan's armies. The walled towns were besieged and taken, largely through the skill of Chinese engineers. The whole great Persian district was harried after the custom of the Mongols through four years; for hundreds of miles the country was so ruined that to this day the old populousness and prosperity have never been recovered.

The army of one of the Khan's generals marched north into Turkestan, and subduing many Turkish peoples, entered beyond the Caucasus the territory of the Polovtiski, themselves Mongols of an earlier invasion. The conquest of Russia had begun. A

Muscovite chronicle of those days illustrates the utter consternation and surprise of the inhabitants at this formidable and sudden incursion: "In those times there came upon us, for our sins, unknown nations. No one could tell their origin, whence they came, or what religion they professed. God alone knew who they were." The people generally believed that the time had come foretold in Revelation when Satan should be let loose with the hosts of "Gog and Magog to gather them together in battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Indeed, in the old map of Tatary, by Hondius, the territories of these two fabled worthies are carefully outlined in what is now Manchuria.

Despite the Tatarean theory of the Mongols' army, the Russian chivalry gathered to the aid of the Polovtisni, and collected an army by the lower Dnieper. Defiantly they killed the ambassadors whom the Mongols sent. The wrathful nomads advanced into the Crimea near the Sea of Azov. The two hosts met in the fatal battle of Kalka. It was the Crécy of Russian chivalry. Hardly a tenth of the army escaped. Ten thousand of the men of Kiev fell; of the princes, six, of the boyars, seventy, died on the field of battle. Matislaf the Bold alone made front, and he was treacherously betrayed and slain.

The way into southern Russia was now open; yet, after their victory in 1224, the Mongols disappeared as suddenly as they had come. The hordes had been

diverted to complete the conquest of China. For thirteen years they were swallowed up by the steppe. The son of Genghis, "Oktai," had succeeded the dead conqueror, and had appointed Batui General of the West.

Again there was heralded an invasion, this time by one of the outlying tribes of Khirgiz on the eastern border. The blow was aimed at the very heart of Russia. The old Slav ballads, or "*bilinî*," tell how Oleg the Handsome fell at Risan. The Tatars entered and burned Moscow in 1237. Onward into the north rolled their conquest, town after town falling. At the Cross of Ignatius, fifty miles from Novgorod, the torrent turned, and, sparing for the time being the ancient republic, swept to the south.

Against the cradle of the Russian race, the white-walled many-towered city of Kiev, Mangu, the grandson of Genghis, now marched. By multitudes the Tatars carried the walls. Fighting to the end, the last defenders went down in a ring around the tomb of the great Yaroslav.

Russia was prostrate at the feet of the nomads. Her princes became vassals, some to journey as far as the Amur to pay their homage to the Great Khan. Without the Tatar Emperor's letters-patent, no prince could assume his inheritance. When the envoy presented the documents, the nobles had to prostrate themselves and accept them kneeling. Each Russian city gave its tribute, even the still uninvaded Novgorod. Every peasant in Muscovy



paid his poll-tax. Indeed, the supremacy of the czars of Moscow, when the Tatar yoke was at length thrown off, was largely due to the wealth which the Romanov family had managed to acquire and to hold during their term as tax-farmers of the Great Khan. Russian troops, supplied as part of the tribute, engaged in the Tatar wars, getting in one instance of record their share of the booty — after the sack of Daghestan. They were drafted on account of their great size and valor into a body-guard for the Mongol Emperor in Peking, corresponding to the Swiss Guard of Louis XVI.

While the conquest of Russia was being consolidated into a permanent Mongol dominion destined to endure for nearly two hundred and fifty years, Batui led his army on into Poland and Bohemia. He took Buda-Pest and devastated the country far and wide. The most alarming accounts preceded him, which are still to be read in the monkish annals of the time. "Anno Domini, 1240, the detestable people of Satan, to wit, an infinite number of Tatars, broke forth like grasshoppers covering the face of the earth, spoiling the eastern confines with fire and sword, ruining cities, cutting up woods, rooting up vineyards, killing the people both of city and country. They are rather monsters than men; clothed with ox-hides, armed with iron plates, in stature thick and short, well-set, strong in body, in war invincible, in labor indefatigable, drinking the blood of their beasts for dainties."

The Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II, who undertook to gather the powers of Europe to meet the danger, wrote to Henry III of England:—

“A barbarous nation hath lately come called Tatars. We know not of what place or originall. A public destruction hath therefore followed the common desolation of Kingdomes and spoil of the fertile land which that wicked people hath passed through, not sparing sex, age or dignity, and hoping to extinguish the rest of mankind. The general destruction of the world and specially of Christendom calls for speedy help and succour.

“The men are of short stature but square and well-set, rough and courageous, have broad faces, frowning lookes, horrible cries agreeing to their hearts. They are incomparable archers.

“Heartily we adjure your majestie in behalfe of the common necessitie, that with instant care and prudent deliberation, you diligently prepare speedy aide of strong knights and other armed Men-at-arms.”

Throughout Europe the dread was universal. In 1248 Pope Innocent IV sent to the Tatars an embassy with money, begging them to cease their ravages. Failing, he summoned Christendom. Louis IX of France prepared a crusade. The fishermen of England could not sell their herrings because their usual customers, the Swedes, had remained at home to defend Scandinavia. Fortunately, the tide of western Mongol invasion had spent itself. After



ON THE ROAD TO THE MING TOMBS





wasting the Danube district, the death of the Great Khan recalled Batui in 1245.

Syrian archives reveal the Mongols' next appearance. In 1243 Hatthou, King of Armenia, sought Mangu Khan at Cambaluc (Peking), praying him to fight the Saracens and recover Jerusalem. Mangu sent his general, who speedily took Antioch, spoiled Aleppo, and sacked the city of Bagdad.

When the latter was stormed, Haloon, the Mongol general, ordered that the Caliph be brought alive into his presence. There had been found in the city a quite surprising booty in treasure and riches. Haloon asked why the Caliph had not used his wealth to levy mercenaries and defend his country. The Caliph replied that he had deemed his own people sufficient to withstand the Mongols. Then the Khan announced that the precious things which had been so cherished would be alone left to the miserable man, who was shut into a chamber with his pearls and gold for sustenance and perished in torments. There was no Caliph of Bagdad after him.

Thus, almost simultaneously, there were conquered by the Mongols, northern China, Syria, Russia, Hungary, and Poland. The stream of human blood that it cost is immeasurable.

Of the first conqueror, Genghis Khan, an Arab poem says: —

On every course he spurred his steed  
He raised the blood-dyed dust.

The lives of four and a half million people are reckoned as his toll on humanity. He had proposed to raze every city and destroy every farm of the five northern Chinese provinces, to make pasture for his nomads, and was only dissuaded by a minister, who ventured death in opposing him. It was he who ordered the million souls of Herat to slaughter. Batui, subduer of Russia, called "Sein Khan" (the Good King), is said after the Moscow massacre to have received 270,000 right ears. Following his fight with the Teutonic knights, near the Baltic, nine sacks of right ears were laid at his feet. "Vanquished, they ask no favor, and vanquishing, they show no compassion." "The Mongols came, destroyed, burnt, slaughtered, plundered, and departed," summarizes an Arab; and the unimaginative chronicles of the Chinese tell without comment of city after city taken, and their inhabitants put to the sword.

Utter ineradicable barbarity would, on the face of things, seem to have been the inmost nature of this people. Yet only a few years later, when Mangu Khan was ruling at Caracorum, the Court had become civilized. Forty-one years after Genghis Khan's death, when the great Venetian traveler Marco Polo arrived at Kublai's Court, the palaces and the organized statecraft at Peking had become a model of efficiency. The Mongols, not as a race, but in the sphere of their leaders, had become a real nation, not unworthy of its success.



It is interesting to reconstruct the Tatar capital and note its development in half a century. The Minorite monk, sent to beg aid from the supposedly Christian Mangu Khan for the delivery of Jerusalem, wrote a detailed description of the city, Caracorum. It had a circuit of three miles and in dearth of stone was rampiered strongly with earth. It had two main streets: one of the Saracens, where the fairs were held and where many merchants assembled, attracted by the traffic with the Court, and with the continuous procession of visitors and messengers; the second chief street was occupied by Chinese, who were artificers. The town had four gates. In the eastern section grain was sold, in the western sheep and goats, in the southern oxen and wagons, in the northern horses. Beyond were large palaces, the residences of the secretaries. The Khan himself had a great court beside the city rampart, enclosed not by an earth but a brick wall. Inside was a large palace, and a number of long buildings, in which were kept his treasures and stores of supplies.

Twice a year the Khan held high festival, with drinking-bouts whereat Master William, a captive taken in Hungary, served as chief butler, officiating at the tree which he had devised to pour forth intoxication. The ambassador of the Caliph of Bagdad came in state, carried upon a litter between two mules. Before the Khan, rich and poor in multitudes moved in procession, dancing, singing, clap-

ping their hands. The guests brought gifts to the monarch. Those of the ambassador of the Turkish Soldan were especially rich, but for quaintness the Soldan of India scored. He sent eight leopards, and ten hare-hounds taught to sit upon the horses' buttocks as do cheetahs. Manifestly it was no raw encampment of barbarians, this Caracorum of Mangu Khan.

If the Mongol's Court could, in 1253, show this degree of "pomp and pageantry," how much was it exceeded by that of Kublai the Magnificent, visited and told of by Marco Polo.

Kublai had established a second seat at Shang-tu, and had built not merely a court, but a city. His palace was of marble, its rooms aglitter with gold. Art had come, and the ceilings were painted with figures of men and beasts and birds. Trees of all varieties, and flowers, were executed with such exquisite skill as filled the traveler, familiar with the best products of Italy, with amaze and delight. Sixteen miles of park, enclosed by a wall, embosomed the palace. Rivers, brooks, and luxuriant meadows diversified the landscape, and white stags, fallow deer, gazelles, roebuck, rare squirrels, and every variety of attractive creature, lent gayety and charm.

The Khan rode weekly with his falcons. Sometimes a leopard sat a-croup behind him, and was loosened at the game that struck his fancy.

The tale runs on of the Khan's silk-corded pavil-

ion in the grove, gilt all over, and having lacquered, dragon-pedimented columns; of cave-born rivers running deep below the ground; of treasured gems and gold.

No wonder that Coleridge's imagination was warmed to his dream poem.

In Xanadu did Kublai Khan  
A stately pleasure dome decree,  
Where Alph the sacred river ran,  
Through caverns measureless to man,  
Down to a sunless sea.

London's tortuous streets were to wait two hundred years for their first pavement, when Cambaluc's were so straight and wide that one could see right along them from end to end, and from one gate to the other. In the Khan's parks, the roads, being all paved and raised two cubits above the surface, never became muddy, nor did the rain lodge on them, but flowed off into the meadows.

In addition to civilization's wealth and magnificence, the Mongols had developed a well-organized government. The Khan's twelve barons exercised his delegated authority, as does a modern cabinet in behalf of the national executive. Cambaluc was policed by a thousand guards. The city wards were laid out, for taxation and government, in squares like a chess-board, and all these plots were assigned to different heads of families. The military roads were constantly kept up by a large force. The Emperor had ordered that all the highways should



be planted with great trees a few yards apart. Even the roads through the unpeopled regions were thus planted, and it was the greatest possible solace to travelers.

The post, too, was as thoroughly organized as Napoleon's. The messengers of the Emperor, bound in whatsoever direction from Cambaluc, found, every twenty-five miles of the way, a relay-station. Where the route lay through uninhabited deserts, the relay-posts were made houses of sojourn. At all stations express messengers were in readiness, as links in the system for speeding dispatches to provincial governors or generals: they were equipped with the fastest horses, which stood fresh and saddled, ready for an instant mount. The men wore girdles hung with bells; when within hearing of a station came the sound of jingling and the clatter of hoofs, the next man similarly provided would leap to his horse, take the delivered letter, and be off at full speed. The post covered a full two hundred miles by day, and an equal distance by night. Marco Polo states that, in the season, fruit gathered one morning at the capital, in the evening of the next day reached the Great Khan in Shang-tu — a distance of ten days' journey.

Organized charity was instituted by the Mongol Khan for Cambaluc. A number of the poorest families became his pensioners, receiving regularly wheat and corn sufficient for the year. The nomad levied as tribute a tenth of all wool, silk, hemp, and

cloth stuffs, and had therefrom clothing made for the indigent of his capital. He had a banking system, paper money, a wonderful military discipline, advanced astronomy; and he opened the Grand Canal to the commerce of the ages. When one recalls the epoch at which all this existed, and realizes that at that time wolves and robbers disputed mastery of the streets of Paris; that the Saracens were lords of half of Spain; that Wycliffe had not yet published his Bible, and that French was the language of the English law courts, — the advance attained is hardly short of marvelous.

In nothing whatsoever is the Mongol civilization more remarkable and contrasting than in its religious toleration — the last acquisition of a civilized state.

While the Christian King of France was engaged in earning the title of "Saint Louis" by extirpating a people of whose creed he disapproved, his envoy, the friar, came to a country which had attained complete religious liberty and toleration. There were "twelve kinds of idolatries of divers nations." Two churches of Mahomet preached the law of the Koran, and one church of the Christians proclaimed the gospel of the Christ.

He found his own creed treated with especial courtesy, the Great Khan subscribing two thousand marks to rebuild a chapel on the behest of an Armenian monk. He relates that the privilege was accorded to the Church of trying any of their number

accused of theft; that the Khan's secretary and his favorite wife were Christians; that a chapel was allowed them within the court enclosure; and that the Nestorians inhabited fifteen cities of Cathay and had a bishopric there.

Marco Polo found the same indulgent tolerance of his religion. In Calaci, the principal city of Tangus, the inhabitants were "idolaters," but there were three churches of Nestorian Christians. In the province of Tenduch, formerly the seat of Presbyter John, King George was a Christian and a priest, and most of the people were Christians. They paid tribute to the Great Khan.

Indeed, if the Mongolian attitude toward armed nations combating in Christ's name has been implacable hostility, toward those of the faith who worshiped peacefully in their midst it has been uniformly tolerant, even favoring. The Nestorians, who brought their creed from Khorassan in the fourth century, had by 500 A.D. bishoprics in Merv, Herat, and Samarcand. The Perait Turkomans as a tribe accepted Christianity, and were unpunished. That the Faith was liberally treated in 781, under the Chinese, is self-acknowledged, on the ancient Nestorian stone of Si-an-fu. Headed by a cross, there is graven in Syrian and Chinese the Imperial decree of 638, ordering a church to be built: it gives an abstract of Christian doctrine, and an account of the "introduction and propagation of the noble law of Ta-t'sin in the Middle Kingdom." In Si-an-fu



at this time there were four thousand foreign families, cut off from return by a northern inroad of fanatical Tibetans into Turkestan.

Another monument of 830, found near the site of the old Ouighour capital on the Orkhon, and carved in Chinese, Turkish, and Ouighour characters, mentions the Western religion. A strange sect of Hebrews of unknown origin found as well an unpersecuted home at K'ai-feng-fu, where the Mosaic rites could be performed. To this day a remnant survives.

The same tolerance for alien faiths marked Tatar rule in Russia. The Khan of Sarai authorized a Greek church and a bishopric in his capital, exempting the monks from his poll-tax. Khan Usbek in 1313 confirmed the privileges of the Church, and punished with death sacrilege against it. Kublai Khan took part regularly in the Easter services, and allowed the Roman missionaries to establish a school in Shang-tu.

Indeed, reviewing the whole sweep of Asia's religious history, one can hardly escape the deduction that if the greatest race of the greatest continent is idolatrous, it is not the fault of the Mongolians.

The Nestorian missionaries had an unsurpassed opportunity in the fourth century when their faith was new and burning, and the world was at peace. But stigmatized as heretics after a doctrinal dispute which had been settled by the logic of a street fight, in which Cyril's Egyptian bravos de-

feated the Syrian henchmen of the Patriarch of Constantinople, their mother church was driven out of the Roman Empire into Persia, where, cut off from the support of the main trunk of fellow Christians, their organization withered away as a lopped branch. The chief congregations in Iran and Turan were overwhelmed by the Moham-medans, until at length there were left only the dwindling congregations in Mongolia, and such communities as those on the Malabar coast in India.

To-day one hears of interesting discoveries. Now it is of the old buried Christian strata among Turkomans of Samarcand, of doctrines preserved through the fury of Islam fanaticism by families that have secretly transmitted Christian worship through the centuries. Next it is of Nestorian monks in Asia Minor, startled at being able to read the characters of Ouighour inscriptions, relics of the writings which their predecessors carried to Mongolia. But for all practical purposes the Nestorian labors, once so promising, are as if they had never been.

Another supreme opportunity for Christianity came when Kublai Khan, in 1268, sent west by the Polo brothers for Roman missionaries to teach his people.

"The Great Khan, . . . calling to him the two brethren, desired them for his love to go to the Pope of the Romans, to pray him to send an hundred wise men and learned in the Christian religion unto him,

who might show his wise men that the faith of the Christians was to be preferred before all other sects, and was the only way of salvation.

“After this the Prince caused letters to the Pope to be written and gave them to the two brothers. Now the contents of the letters were as follows: He begged that the Pope would send as many as an hundred persons of our Christian faith; intelligent men acquainted with the seven arts, well qualified to prove by force of argument to idolaters and other kind of folk, that the law of Christ was best; and if they would prove this, he and all under him would be Christians.”

In the advance of Christianity the steps ahead have been made not so much by the conversion of the people as by the winning of their rulers, — Constantine, giving to Rome's legions the standard of the Cross; Clovis; Ethelbert; Vladimir, who drove the whole population of Kiev naked into consecrated water of the Dnieper; Charlemagne, moving against the Saxons with his corps of priests. Where these spoke for a hundred thousand souls, Kublai spoke for a hundred million. He was able to deliver; it was the Pope who did not rise to the occasion. In all Christendom Gregory could find but two priests to go with the Khan's messengers, and these turned back in the midst of the journey, alarmed by the prospect of its hardships. The Khan, who wished some religion, sent to Tibet, and received the Buddhist missionaries whom he requested. So China,



Mongolia, Tibet, and eastern Turkestan are Buddhist to this day.

Yet once again the Christian opportunity came. The way which had been opened into China by Matteo Ricci had been followed by Jesuit missionaries, until at the beginning of the seventeenth century there were two churches in Peking, some three hundred thousand converts in the Empire, and the favor of the Emperor Hang was with the Western faith.

When Christianity was spreading with cumulative rapidity, the Dominicans and Franciscans came in and denounced the Jesuit workers for tolerating the ancestor-cult of the Chinese, and for permitting God to be called "Shang-ti." In vain the Emperor Hang, appealed to by the Jesuits, declared that by "Shang-ti" the Chinese meant "Ruler of the Universe," and that the Confucian rites were family ceremonies and not idolatry. The rival friars persuaded the Pope to proclaim "Tien-chu" the proper Chinese word for God, and to condemn all ancestral ceremonies. Thereupon, the Chinese Emperor, rebuffed and disgusted with all the wrangling fraternities, condemned the Christian religion and killed the friars, save those whom he wanted for the Imperial Observatory.

One cannot but recall an early commentary made by Mangu Khan upon the jarring Christian sects whose rival dogmas have prevented, and do to this day, the common progress.

“We Mongolians believe that there is but one God, through whom we live and die, and we have an upright heart towards Him. That as God hath given unto the hand fingers, so He hath given many ways to men. God hath given the Scriptures to you, and ye Christians keep them not. But He hath given us soothsayers, and we do that which they bid us, and we live in peace.”

For some years after Kublai Khan's death, the Mongol Empire held its preëminence by inertia rather than by strength. Each of the khans had his kingdom. Presently the nations that had been subdued began to rise against the numerically small garrisons of Mongolia. In China, the young Bonze, Chu-Yuan-Chang, finally organized a band of Boxers, and succeeded in driving out the last degenerate Mongol khan from Peking. He united the old eighteen provinces and established the Ming Dynasty, the tombs and palaces of whose kings are still the most celebrated structures of China.

In Russia, Dimitri of the Don gathered one hundred and fifty thousand men and defeated the Mongols at Kulikovo.

If the old supreme monarch of the north had lost his sway, in the south the Mongol race was being lifted to its second period of empire under Tamerlane, the Iron Khan. His was the history of the first Mongol conqueror repeated. The ant that Timur watched during his exile, which fell back and returned sixty-nine times before it carried its grain of

wheat to the top of the wall, was the symbol of his early career. Constant obscure tribal conflicts, unsuccessful at first, led finally to a gathering of the nomads into a terrible invading army. The Golden Horde was hurled against Dimitri, defeated him, and marched upon Moscow. It was sacked with the horrors of Genghis' days, and all Russia was ravaged to the Don and the Sea of Azov. One of Tamerlane's armies traversed the Pamir into India, and, by the capture of Delhi, opened the way for the Mogul Dynasty of his sons, which was to endure until the Indian Mutiny. His Indian army, returning, swept a swath of desolation through Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Georgia, and Armenia. Every city that was taken was sacked, and the event commemorated by a pyramid of skulls embedded in mortar. One hundred and twenty pyramids marked Tamerlane's path through India alone. The Delhi pyramid was made from the skulls of one hundred thousand slain "with the sword of holy war."

Bajazet, Sultan of the Ottoman Turks, — themselves sprung from a nomad Mongol tribe, — was threatened by Tamerlane on the west. In a great battle Bajazet was defeated.

Alhacen, Tamerlane's Arabian secretary, relates that the conquered king was examined by his master.

"Wherefore dost thou use so great cruelty towards men? Dost thou not pardon sex or age?"

Bajazet might logically have responded with



a "tu quoque," but his position did not warrant it.

"I am appointed by God to punish tyrants," continued Tamerlane. He had an iron cage made; and locked within it like a linnet, the unfortunate sultan was carried from place to place, because, in the Tatar's naïvely quoted words, "It is necessary that he be made an exemplary punishment to all the cruel of the world, of the just wrath of God against them."

The invasion of China was under way, in 1405, when Tamerlane died, leaving a renewed Mongol Empire, which stretched from the Hoang-ho to the Don, and from Siberia to India.

Here again the descendants of the savage conquerors rose to the requirements of their sovereignty and obeyed the peaceful and humane maxims that each of the two great and warlike and pitiless tyrants had bequeathed to his successors. They ruled with a fair degree of wisdom and a large measure of success. A descendant of Tamerlane was to build at Agra, in 1630, the most splendid monument the world has ever seen, the Taj-Mahal.

In the century after Tamerlane's death the Hordes split up once more, Ivan the Great of Moscow, having consolidated many neighboring principalities, with the nominal consent of his Tatar overlord, at length seized the opportunity to refuse the payment of tribute. The Mongol Khan had no longer the power to compel it at the sword's point, and without a battle the Tatar supremacy was covertly

relinquished. In 1480 the long servitude of Russia to the alien invader was ended. From this time the Mongol nomads appear hardly at all in history. They withdrew gradually to their Asian steppes, leaving in Turkey, in the Crimea, and in India, the kingdoms of their offshoot tribes. Russia and China still felt the raids of the horsemen, for the khans of the Golden Horde were yet not to be despised.

Fernan Hendez Pinto, the shipwrecked Portuguese of the generation after Vasco da Gama, was in China in 1542 when Tatars came down and besieged it. He saw "an emperor called Caran whose seigniorie confineth within the mountains of Gen Halidan, a nation which the naturals call Moscoby, of whom we saw some in this citie [of Tuymican], ruddie, of big stature, with shoes and furred clothes, having some Latin words, but seeming rather, for aught we observed, idolaters than Christians.

"To the ambassador of that Prince Caran, better entertainment was given than to all the rest. He brought with him one hundred and twenty men of his guard, with arrows and gilded quivers, all clothed in chamois-skins, murrie and green. After whom followed twelve men of high giantlike stature, leading great greyhounds, in chains and collars of silver."

When Yermak cleared the way to Sibir, and opened the path that was to lead to the Pacific, the Mongols were pushed south. Russians still had Tatars all along their frontier, but these were

pressed steadily back as the Slavic race advanced eastward. The Tatar domains were restricted soon to the steppe country and Mongolia.

After Yermak's time the Mongol power sank. It fell further when the Manchus established their dynasty in Peking in 1644. So low had its estate become that even the old fighting instinct was gone, — all the passionate desire for independence that has been the Mongols' birthright since the dawn of history. How had it vanished? Christianity had not come. Buddhism had come, and it was the tolling of the knell for freedom.

The sum of national energy and the heat of the new dispensation were diverted into theocracy. The meaning of life, its value and its duty, these basic ideas which determine the ultimate activities of every race, were revolutionized by the new faith. To the Pagan the world was good despite its evils; struggle against environment measured the worth of manhood and freedom was the supreme blessing. To the Buddhist, life was an evil in which the soul had become enmeshed. The path to release lay not in overcoming the environment, but in retreating from it within the citadel of the soul. Resignation, self-surrender, the yielding of this world to secure the other world beyond, — such were the forces which transformed the Mongols from the foremost warriors into the priest-ridden, subject, unaspiring people of to-day. The supreme problem in the autonomy of China, and in the subjugation of India,



is involved in the point of view of Buddhism and its outgrowth in character.

In 1650 a son of the leader, Tu-she-tu Khan, was made chief of the Mongol *kutukhtus*, or cardinals, with the title of Cheptsun Damba. This monsignor began the Urga hierarchy of Gigin, or god-priests, which has continued until the present time, when the eighth Gigin reigns at the Holy City. As the powerful Tu-she-tu clan lost its vitality, Chinese influence made itself felt. This was directed in general toward the encouragement of the priesthood, whose celibacy and other-worldliness dovetailed with Chinese control.

The Mongol khans, becoming through the years more and more unwarlike, had grown tired of internecine feuds. They were at last won over by China to a nominal allegiance and the payment of a formal tribute, reciprocating which, imperial gifts of tenfold value served as artful bribes. Modestly, diplomatically, came King Stork, leaving to the local Daimios, seemingly undisturbed, their feudal sway. With the coming of the first Manchu governor began the present era of Mongolia.

As time went on, the Chinese, more astute and cunning, took little by little from the careless hands of the nomad princes the reins of real political power. The native chiefs were wheedled into giving up many ancient rights over the vassals, as well as their general taxing powers. The celibate priests, who were draining the manhood of their idle but powerful



THE GLORY IS DEPARTED





hierarchy, were subsidized and directed by the interlopers. They preached to their confiding countrymen obedience and submission. In the Mongol Gigin of Urga, the Chinese raised up a native power superior to all the old feudal lords, whose armies melted away beneath the ecclesiastical dominion. When the Gigin became in turn too great a menace, they caused it to be decreed that each succeeding incarnated Buddha must come from Tibet, and that his main powers must be delegated to a "Council of Lamas."

In the train of the Manchus came the Chinese traders, polite, supple, calling themselves friends of the Mongols, offering their alluring wares on undefined credit terms which tangled the unsuspecting natives in inextricable usury. Peking-brought gewgaws were paid for a hundred times over in the food and clothing which the natives kept giving to the compounding voracity of the debt.

Chinese coolies pressed up the river-valleys, begging land here, intruding themselves there; more followed, and ever more, until the best of the pastures were filched away, and the nomads, in order to exist, were forced to trek to the more distant and barren slopes. Deforesting transformed into deserts whole provinces. The once famed virtue of the Tatar women is forgotten, and every Chinaman has his "friend" whom he leaves behind when he returns to his native land. The big prosperous Mongol families, that early travelers noted, are no more.

Two or three children are the most that one sees to a *yurta*, and the population, owing to lama celibacy and the decreased means of subsistence, is declining from year to year.

This is the people and this the land which sent horde after horde through centuries to conquer the world; where in half a dozen generations a little band of blacksmiths like the Turks could breed a nation that would dominate Asia. With narrowing means of subsistence, and aliens draining their small surplus capital, the Mongol race lies prostrate beneath the Yellow Empire. The grim Malthusian tenet that the world cannot give food for all its children falls short here of the grim actuality. The silent invasion of the Chinese has been as ruthless as was the march of Genghis Khan. The economic garroting of a race is what the world has seen in Mongolia.

No longer are there men to lead or men to fight. Obediently and submissively the once fierce, ranging warriors have yielded to the artfully-imposed yoke. The army of unmatched cavalry has become a memory, and a nation of fighters has become a race of timid herders, with little heart or brain. The sons of the old soldiers have learned to shave their heads and croon Tibetan prayers, and the fires of a people's ambition are quenched in the creed that makes abstention from effort a cardinal virtue, and annihilation life's supreme objective. What there was of virtue and of valor lies buried in distant graves.

Ringed with the bones of slaughtered captives, rusted swords at their sides, they sleep well, those old forgotten warriors. In poverty and hardship, priest-ridden and debt-ridden, decimated and degenerated, their descendants eke out their sterile days. But there lingers yet among them a half-forgotten memory of the heroic past. The wandering chanter still sings in the twilight the old "Song of Tamerlane" — Tamerlane who will come again, they say, and lead the hordes once more to victory.

When the divine Timur dwelt in our tents,  
The Mongol Nation was redoubtable and warlike.  
Its least movements made the earth bend;  
Its mens' look froze with fear  
The ten thousand people upon whom the sun shines.  
O Divine Timur, will thy great soul soon return?  
Return, return; we await thee, O Timur!



## IX

### CHINA

**D**ESTINY has bequeathed to his once subject-race the heritage of Genghis Khan, but whether its Manchu possessor can or cannot hold even his own birthright is to-day an enigma. The last few years have seen the gathering of the eagles, disputing the mastery of eastern Asia, where China stands against the world. Slav, Saxon, and Frank press in, upon the supine empire. Has this yellow race the manhood and the capacity to rally against them and retrieve its national integrity?

The cession of Formosa after the war of 1895 began the partition. China's defenselessness was then visualized. The revelation of her easy defeat set every predatory nation on the alert. Watchful for an occasion, which two murdered missionaries supplied, Germany, by clumsy but successful unscrupulousness, seized Kiao-chow and two hundred miles of hinterland. Three weeks after the bludgeoned ratification of Admiral Diedrich's grab, Russia procured the signature of the intimidated Emperor to the lease of Port Arthur. France demanded and secured the cession of Kwang-chow-wan, on the mainland opposite the island of Hainan. England acquired the lease of Wei-hai-wei, and con-

tinental territory opposite Hong-kong. Italy came to claim as its portion Sanmen Bay; but this at least China found courage to refuse.

Then followed a period when, backed each by its government, invading cohorts of promoters scooped in franchises and special privileges of every description. The latter part of 1899 saw foreigners pushing in from Manchuria on the north, where Russia with her so-termed railway guards held the strategic route, and from Yun-nan on the south, where France was constructing a similar road of conquest. It showed four European nations so established along the coast that only by courtesy of a foreign government could a Chinese vessel cast anchor in some of the principal ports of China. It saw a Belgian-French railway driving from Peking into the heart of the Empire at Hankow; an American line started north from Canton to the same objective; an English line controlling the territory between the main northern trade-centres, Niu-chwang and Tien-tsin; a French society in possession of a great south-country copper concession; Russians with the exclusive right to all the gold in two *eimucks* of Mongolia; and an English syndicate deeded the best of the Chinese coal-fields.

The partition was thus far accomplished. The continental nations seemed to be ready for all that they could get. The strength of Great Britain's traditional position, based upon maintaining the integrity of China, was shaken by her lease of Wei-

hai-wei, although this lease was to run only so long as Russia should hold Port Arthur. England was on the point of recognizing openly "spheres of influence," as is shown by the inferential claim to special British rights in the Yangtse region set forth in the official transactions of Sir Claude McDonald, and brought out under parliamentary interpellation, when a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Balfour Ministry spoke of "British rights" to the provinces adjoining the Yangtse River and Ho-nan and Che-kiang.

There was apparently good warrant for the general belief that in expectation of an impending partition a provisional understanding had been reached by the different chancelleries, regarding the share of each nation, England being allotted the mighty domain from the Yellow Sea to Burma and Afghanistan, including all Tibet, as well as six hundred and fifty thousand square miles in China proper. In general, from Shan-tung inland the valley of the Hoang-ho was destined for Germany; the district north of her Anamese possessions for France; all Mongolia and Manchuria for Russia; Corea and the province of Fokien on the mainland opposite Formosa, for Japan. Peking and the surrounding district, whose disposition was embarrassed by jealousy if not by scruples, was alone left for the Chinese.

At this critical juncture, when the day of dismemberment seemed indeed to have arrived, the United



States came forward in behalf of the "open-door" doctrine, as a means of preserving the nationality and the integrity of China. In a circular letter to the Powers, our Secretary of State, Mr. John Hay, asked that adhesion be given in writing to three main propositions, appertaining to each country "within its respective sphere, of whatever influence." These points were that no treaty port rights or other vested interests should be interfered with; that the Chinese tariff should be maintained; that no discriminating railway charges or harbor-dues should be imposed.

America's might, thrown into the wavering balance, turned the scale. Great Britain gave ready adhesion. Though the responses of some of the other Powers were evasive, none was at this time willing to bear the onus of an adverse stand: each nation nominally accepted, and the movement toward partition was checked.

To most people Chinese matters seemed settled. The preservation of a nation had been combined with the guaranteeing of a great free market; the orgy of grabbing had ceased. Russia, assenting to the open door, had promised to evacuate Manchuria. The special concessions, though secured by stand-and-deliver methods, it was felt would bring economic improvements and would furnish to the Chinese a demonstration of the beneficent results of Western civilization.

It was recognized that there would be frictions:

misunderstandings are inevitable when old ways are faced with new. The extra-territorial rights of foreigners and their converts, absolutely necessary to protect their liberties if not their lives, could not but create occasional unharmonious situations, in which the consuls would have to intervene. The severity of the judicial punishment meted out at times to rioting cities for harm done to the protégés of the Powers was to be deplored, each nation grieving at the atrocities the others had seen fit to perpetrate.

But periodic local and temporary disturbances had been going on from time immemorial. Did not the Chinese realize, we reasoned, that their old corrupt government had been given another undeserved chance to try and march with the rest of the race; that this world is not the place for graft-ridden relics from the fifth century B.C.? The least we felt was that, thanks to the bearer of the "Flowery Banner," the Chinese had been given a last opportunity. A self-denying Occident had guaranteed the nation's existence and had presumably earned its everlasting gratitude. "Let China get up and do something — let it redeem itself."

A very small circle of Chinese shared this Western view, and realized at their true value the mights if not the rights. There existed among the literati at Peking and in the coast cities the rudiments of a foreign liberal party. Recognizing that Western methods must come, they had been in favor of ac-



THE BRIDGE AND TABLETS IN PEI-HAI





cepting foreign improvements even at the cost of railway concessions and the violated dwellings of wind and water spirits. When this party won over the young Emperor, there began the period of foreign concessions. Reforms, too, covering every subject, from queue-cutting to postage-stamps, were inaugurated.

The summer of 1898 saw the important edict which ordered the abolition of the Wen-chang essays and the penmanship posts, with the Emperor's personal comment that the examinations should test "a knowledge of ancient and modern history, and information in regard to the present state of affairs, with special reference to the governments and institutions of the countries of the five great continents, and their arts and sciences." A Bureau of Mines was established, a patent-office, schools, a scheme of army reform.

The climaxing decree was the one abolishing sinecures. For the Emperor's unreconstructed entourage this last was too much. Foreign aggression had embittered to the point of unreason mandarin and coolie alike. The *coup d'état* planned by the Dowager Empress, and executed by the reactionaries, virtually dethroned the Emperor, exiled his advisers, and ended the foreign-encouragement reform.

Indeed it was not within human nature for it to endure. From the point of view of the party of the second part the aspect of the whole foreign rela-

tionship, even after the Hay Note, looked very ugly indeed. The fact of guaranteed integrity was obscured by the *laissez-faire* of the already consummated grabs. The idea that gripped them was the humiliation of foreign occupation and foreign aggression. It was as if the Russians and the English had just seized rival reservations on Long Island and the Jersey coast, commanding New York City; as if the English had wrenched away Charleston; the Germans, Philadelphia; the French, New Orleans; and Cossacks were garrisoned in strategic points throughout New England. It was as if the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railway were manned and guarded by Slavs, the New York Central by Belgians, the Pennsylvania by Prussians; as if the Pittsburg mines were handed over *en bloc* to an English corporation, and the Russians had exclusive mining rights to the gold of Alaska's Yukon region. It was as if America's protective-tariff and contract-labor laws were repealed at foreign dictation, and a flood of foreign machine-made goods and undesired immigrants were poured into the unwilling country. It was as if yellow-robed Buddhist lamas were everywhere haranguing the Yankee farmers, telling them of the fraudulent nature of the Christian creed, and urging upon them an approved canine method for disposing of deceased ancestors, to replace their superstitious funeral services. It was as if astrologers, calling themselves engineers, were to dig up New York cemeteries in order to



erect prayer-wheels; as if the apostates whom these yellow priests had drawn into their joss-houses were enabled to dodge part of the taxes, which consequently fell with added oppression on the rest of the people; and as if, when they did something which others would in the normal course of events get punished for, a lama came before the magistrate and got them off. As if the President and the Senate were given a weekly wiggling by the diplomatic corps, and were periodically forced to deed away sections of the forest reserve and tracts of particularly desirable territory.

With such an aspect as this, which represents what in an undefined, bewildered way the Chinese saw and felt, it is no wonder that they considered the Confucian dictum obsolete: "Do not unto others, what you would not that they should do unto you"; and joined the patriotic harmonious Fists, — the Boxers.

Chinese sentiment was ungauged in the West because we had never put ourselves in their places. Unforeseen save by a few unheeded Cassandras, and unprepared for, there broke out the planless, leaderless Boxer Rebellion, grim fruitage of the national resentment. A few hastily gathered legation guards were alone available for defense. Spreading from the Shan-tung Province, where the severity of the Germans had goaded the usually peaceable people to madness, the I-Ho-Chuan besieged the legations at Peking. It was the infuriated and ill-directed rush

of a patriotism real if futile, — a turning against the spoilers.

The movement was crushed in a torrent of blood, and with a devastation that for long will leave its mark upon the northern provinces. The closing year of the nineteenth century saw the Taku forts stormed, Tien-tsin, the Liverpool of the North, taken over and administered by a foreign board, Manchuria and Mongolia swarming with Cossacks, the Dowager Empress in flight, and her capital looted by foreign armies.

The coming of alien soldiery to the Forbidden Palace left its impress in the fiercer though more carefully smothered hatred of mandarins and people. It was still a blind resentment. They were injured, stung in all their pride and self-sufficiency, but dumb, bewildered, not knowing what to do, which way to turn. The liberals with their solution were gone ; with them had passed the hopes of a progressive policy.

The people, perplexed, looked to their reëstablished reactionary rulers for guidance. But these officials, mostly of advanced age, and steeped in the ideas and ideals of the Confucian classics, were anxious mainly to close the ears and eyes of the masses to the unpleasant realities ; to feather their own nests and finish off their lives in tranquility.

The Chinese Minister to the United States, Wu Ting Fang, gives a graphic picture of these Celestial Bourbons : —

“It must be remembered that most of the high officials in Peking are born and bred Chinese of the old school. All the princes and nearly all the ministers of state have spent most of their days within the four walls of the capital. They have never visited even other parts of the empire, not to say foreign lands; nor can they speak any other language besides their own. They have absolutely no knowledge or experience of foreign ways except those who are ministers of the Tsung-li Yamen, and the experience of these men has been confined exclusively to their official intercourse with the foreign representatives at Peking.”

Buttressing their hereditary *intransigence*, these mandarins had, after the Hay Circular, possessed a measure of confidence that their yielding of open-door trade privileges to the greed of the foreigners had enlisted a combined support which would preserve China's remaining national powers.

But so powerless to fulfill their purposes had these paper pledges become, so far was the open-door doctrine from settling the situation, that in China's own territory, where by solemn promises of both parties no special privileges could accrue, the year 1904 saw two Powers in the throes of the greatest war of modern times.

If the realization of the combatants' purpose has signified much to the nations of the West, — perhaps rather to the United States, for the others nursed no illusions, — to China it has meant far



more. It has brought for the first time a real and general appreciation of the necessity for modernized, efficient self-defense.

Fifteen years of aggression have been needed to drive home this knowledge. While the defeats of 1895 came as a blow to a few keen-minded Chinese, to most they were a matter of entire indifference. China was not conquered, they reasoned: only two provinces took part while the viceroys of the rest looked idly on. "That Shan-tung man's war" was the general attitude; "Li Hung Chang's boats beaten." When it was over, merely Formosa, the little-valued island of "tame barbarians," had been lost. The traditional policy of playing off the jealous powers one against the other had apparently succeeded; it had cleared the Japanese from Corea and Port Arthur. China as a nation was hardly touched, and multitudes of people never knew there had been a war.

The seizures of 1897-1899, coming close upon each other, exasperated, but taught no lesson. The mass of Chinese, and even those in high official circles, believed that a little effort would drive the foreign devils into the sea. The march of the Allies to Peking stunned them. It was their first facing of the fact.

The Russo-Japanese War, and the partition of the province that had cradled their Emperor's dynasty, dissipated their fool's paradise. It was seen then, clearly, by all, that China's only hope of maintain-



HSUEN-WU GATE, PEKING





ing her integrity lay in her defensive power. With the object, not of securing the blessings of civilization (which the overwhelming majority of Chinamen desire no more than we do the Holy Inquisition), but of beating away the spoilsmen, the Peking rulers turned at length to the survey of their actual military condition. As this concerns intimately the Chinese internal situation, a summary of it may be pertinent.

The Hwai-lien regulars, to the number of twenty-five thousand, are well-drilled, and well-armed with Chinese-made Mausers. They are stationed in the northern provinces, including the Taku and Peh-t'ang forts, the Tien-tsin station, and the neighborhood of Peking. These make up the only national force of modern troops at the disposal of the Chinese Government, but the private armies of various viceroys bring up the total somewhat as follows: The camps of foreign-drilled troops, formerly Yuan Shi Kai's, probably the best in China, number roundly twenty thousand. From the Shen-ki Ying, or artillery force, from the camps of the Manchu Banners, which the Government is making an effort to whip into some kind of shape, from the Imperial body-guard, and other scattered and less important troops, ten thousand effectives might be culled. In the south the Viceroy of Nanking has, all told, some twenty thousand more men holding the Wusung forts, who may be classed as efficient and well-armed; some of these are German- and Japanese-

drilled. This total of seventy-five thousand represents China's numerical military strength in effective modern troops.

The old hereditary organization of twenty-four Banners, adds some two hundred thousand Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese, — of the privileged soldier caste, which through two hundred and fifty years has drawn an annual subsidy of eight million taels from the Peking treasury. Billeted as the nominal wardens of the provincial cities and garrisoned around Peking, these Tatars have become as a rule so degenerated by immemorial idleness as to be useless save for picturesque parades. The one positive element is that they are men under pay, subject to order, and available for initial experiments.

The Green Banner, or militia, under the command of a general for each province, is theoretically composed of a large number of native Chinese. The army is made up mainly of officers. The higher officials of the Green Banner acquire the pay, commissary, and weapon-allotments of their nominal armies, and pad the rolls with the names of coolies who come out for the annual review in return for the small portion of their nominal wage which must be spent to keep face.

To expect these men to get out and fight is obviously more than they bargained for. The Green Banner can deliver about the same relative number of actual soldiers per unit of population that a Mississippi backwoods county polls for the Republican

party. The most that can be said for the Green Banner is that it has a list of men's names from which a certain number of real recruits might be obtained.

The military organization of even the best regular troops is feeble. Constant word reaches the press of soldiers revolting for lack of pay. In one such instance nine hundred men near the Manchuria border mutinied and were put down with difficulty, tying up the caravans for some time. Aside from questions of discipline, and considering number only, it is doubtful if, in the whole empire of four hundred million people, one hundred thousand decently armed and drilled troops could be gathered, in an extremity, for defensive purposes.

Drilled and armed men in whatever numbers are, however, but one element of a country's defensive power. Organization, transportation, commissary, and supply are factors of hardly less importance. The troops that get there are the ones which count, and even a Chinese army marches on its belly. Russia's defective transport, to mention but one case, undoubtedly decided both the Crimean and the Japanese wars. The question of territorial defense is one of several dimensions, first of which is how soon could a given force, with its necessary commissary and ammunition-supply, be disposed along the various lines of possible attack.

Making the round of the Chinese Empire, it is apparent that Tibet and Mongolia, for all the resistance that could be made, might be taken by



England and Russia respectively whenever they were minded to cross the border. The Chinese could throw out barring columns no further westward than Sze-chuan, no further northward than the Great Wall.

On the frontier of Corea, the Yalu River formerly defined the first line of defense. But this frontier has been moved westward by the Japanese, so that it would be a political impossibility to put men there even were it practically possible. The present line would of necessity be between Shan-hai-kwan and Yung-ping. Perhaps withdrawals from the northern provinces, the viceroys permitting, might admit massing here fifty thousand troops. But this, as well as any other possible line, is entirely unfortified, giving hardly more advantages to the repelling than to the attacking forces. There would be no second line of defense, nothing to fall back upon but the old Tatar Wall of Peking. Beyond this fifty thousand any quota brought from the south would consume a very considerable time, probably a month, even allowing that their semi-independent viceroys did not discreetly hold off altogether.

Further east, at Shan-tung, Germany's railway pierces to the heart of the Confucian province; while from the Chinese military centre in Chi-li there is no corresponding railroad, Chinese-manned, giving them access, were it necessary to repel aggression. The Anamese railways afford the French means of bringing up troops, where China could

assemble an army only after weeks of marching. The Burmese frontier of Britain's dominion is similarly vantaged.

The German *Land-Wehr*, while the first armies go to the front, may be called out and mobilized, until the whole manhood of the nation is in arms. Such a body is nonexistent in the Celestial Empire. Like her own lichee nut, once the frail shell of her resistance is broken, the meat is ready for the eating. Considered solely from the military standpoint, aside from reform as such, China is as supine as a huge helpless jelly-fish, with disconnected nerve-ganglia, and not even the rudiments of a backbone.

For the first requirements of national defense, what is necessary? For the north there should be a thoroughly drilled and equipped regular army of at least one hundred and fifty thousand men, with capacity for rapid concentration in the neighborhood of Peking. For the south a standing army of at least fifty thousand men. An intermediate army of fifty thousand more should be available near Hankow, capable of being thrown either way. The Peking-Hankow railway line must have strategic branches to Canton, Shanghai, Yun-nan, and Shan-tung. These must be controlled not by foreigners but by Chinese. There must exist a reserve of, say, five hundred thousand men, at least partially drilled, from which to draw reinforcements. There must be arsenals able to make all the weapons and ammunition for these forces, since foreign



nations will continue to command the sea. The sums needed to realize such a programme must be available, and China must possess the organization and fiscal system for the conduct of a war. From this summary it may be seen that adequate defense requires a measure of increase in her efficiency that is revolutionary. The demand which such measures would make upon any nation is stupendous. How much more would it exact of China, where for its accomplishment every single factor must overthrow the ideas, the principles, the very morals evolved through centuries in the most conservative race of the globe!

At the outset, for the personnel of such a regular army, two hundred and fifty thousand adults must be transformed from stolid, superstitious field-tillers and coolies, never of combative spirit, into courageous, disciplined fighting men. Can this be done? Some, eminently qualified to judge, answer that it can; but Chinese history has not for several thousand years furnished many glorious annals. Where a stark fight is recorded, as at Albazin, or against the Mongol khans in the sixteenth century, the warriors have been Manchus rather than Chinese. Whenever an aggressive nation, be it Hiung-nu or Khitan, Mongol or Manchu, British or Japanese, has gone against the genuine Chinaman, the latter has invariably submitted. It is only when his subjugators, absorbed into the swarming mass of conquered, have degenerated, that the native has been





## PEKING

Where the Allies' main assault was made



able to rise and drive out his enfeebled oppressor. The Chinese have conquered by time and their birth-rate.

On the other hand, the Chinaman has qualities which, translated into military virtues, should theoretically give him a great initial advantage over any other race. He is comparatively without nerves; he can hold a gun without a tremor for what to a Westerner is an inconceivably long time; he has good eyes and a strong sight; he can be victualed on a few handfuls of rice; he is entirely indifferent as to where or how he lodges; he is sober and reliable; he is a big-bodied man, stronger even, perhaps, than the Japanese; he is docile, obedient, and susceptible to discipline. Indeed, in all that concerns his physical qualities and certain moral superiorities, one could not ask for better raw material. When well led he has at times done very creditably. A generation of such leadership as Yuan Shi Kai's would do not a little toward bringing out what there is latent in this people.

If in the army organization the gap between what is and what should be is so great, how much wider is it in the government organization needed to finance reform. The revenues of China are some \$100,000,000. About \$36,000,000 are allotted to military purposes. When from this has been deducted the eighteen million-odd which go to the generals of the Red and Green Banners, there is left, theoretically, about \$18,000,000 for the real army. Actually there



is efficiently applied probably not over \$10,000,000. The regular army of Japan — two hundred and twenty-five thousand — takes \$40,000,000 effectively expended. China must begin from the very bottom, whereas Japan is simply carrying along. A judicious total expenditure of at least \$50,000,000 is needed for China's army. With the additional railway and arsenal programme, and other concomitant work, the demands over and above present outlays would reach around \$110,000,000. Add this to the present budget, less the well-spent ten millions, and there is to be reckoned a total budget of at least \$200,000,000.

Could China raise such a defense-fund on top of her present hundred-million-dollar budget? Could she cut down on present expenses to help it out? The latter might be considered. Theoretically the wasted army money of the present budget might be saved and applied. Practically the vested interests in the graft are so important as to make it of infinite difficulty. The mere beginning of sinecure-cutting cost the Emperor the actuality of his throne and nearly his head.

The list shows other items of expenditure which cannot be materially economized. The large and growing sum which goes to repay interest, foreign loans, and indemnities, cannot be touched, nor can the \$16,000,000 sent to the provinces for their local expenditures. The \$8,000,000 for the Peking salaries and palace expenses is a fixture. The

modest and well-administered \$3,000,000 of the customs expenditures, covering about all the public works that China undertakes, — the lighthouse and coast-patrol allowances, the mails, the interpreters' school, — this cannot be pared. The needed money must come if at all by increase of the receipts. One is driven irresistibly back to the Government's taxing capacity.

The physical possibility of such taxation undoubtedly exists. The per capita revenue which the Government receives from its four hundred million subjects is but twenty-five cents. The American per capita revenue is eight dollars, the Japanese five dollars, the Russian twelve dollars, the Indian — perhaps in conditions the closest parallel to the Chinese—one dollar and a quarter. An extra twenty-five cents would raise the Chinese Government well above all financial difficulties, and still leave the rate far below that of the other great nations of the world.

Looking at the actual mechanism for revenue collection, one is met by difficulties which have rooted themselves deeply into the system. One cannot squeeze any larger proportion of the needed sum than the present \$25,000,000 from the Imperial Maritime Customs. Tariff-rates are fixed by treaty, and the collections, under English direction, are as efficient as they can become. The likin duties on freight during inland transit are such a plague to commerce that, far from being increased, they

should be swept away altogether as one of the earliest of reform measures. This \$14,000,000 is produced at so heavy a price of fettered and thwarted commerce that added tariff would but aggravate the strangulation without materially increasing income. The opium revenue of \$5,000,000 is likewise an item which, for the best interests of China, should disappear from a reformed budget, and the "foreign dirt" from the Celestial domain. In any event opium cannot be made much more productive.

After these eliminations there are left items which bring in \$56,000,000. The sources consist principally of the land-tax, the grain-tribute, native customs, and the salt gabelle. The returns from these factors would require to be nearly trebled, if they were relied upon to make up the bulk of the needed total.

The method of collection is a further check to greater income. The existing machinery of fiscal administration operates, roughly, as follows: When the funds begin to run short for the usual expense-accounts, the various executive boards apply to the Board of Revenue. The latter makes a glorified guess at the sum which, considering harvests, rebellions, and other elements, each province might be able to pay. It is thereupon put to the provincial officials, consisting usually of a viceroy, a governor, a treasurer, and a judge, to supply something approximating this sum. The provincial syndicate, through the medium of various intermediate offi-



cials, such as the *tao-tai* and the *fu*-prefect, whose powers are nebulous and overlapping, call upon the eighty-odd county magistrates for an estimated share. The magistrates, *shien-kwan*, called colloquially "father and mother officials," whose varied functions include rendering justice, keeping the jail, leading the religious processions, and collecting the taxes, send out each his hundred henchmen to get the actual money or grain. Of this hierarchy of officials not one has a salary which would keep his establishment going for a month. Of necessity the laborer must draw his own hire first from the harvest.

Under such a satrap system, by the grace of human nature, each official takes what the traffic will bear, letting pass to the man higher up enough to conciliate his claim and to keep face with Peking. If the penalties which follow deficient generosity to a superior define the maximum contribution, the minimum is fixed by the famine or the rebellion point. With this method in vogue, it is not unreasonable to assume that the amounts gathered in the first instance are about as great as can be wrung from the people. An increase of the Government's receipts would have to come through shaking down the office-holders for a larger share of their pickings. Such a revenue as a real reform would demand must despoil of vested rights in his livelihood every mandarin, viceroy, *tao-tai*, *fu*-prefect, magistrate, and petty publican in the empire. It might be practicable to commute the *likin*, or inland

octroi dues, for fixed sums by agreement with the *hongs*, or merchant associations. This was done in Li Hung Chang's province, Kwang-tung, where \$2,750,000 was paid in order to get rid of likin dues which netted only \$670,000. Enough might be raised by this means to pay the officials at just rates. Then honest collections might reasonably be demanded, and a beginning be made of fiscal reform. But it is apparent from these outlines how long a way China has to travel before her capacity for self-defense is a reality.

The facts are now being comprehended by all classes. From the coast cities, a growing number of young Chinese have been sent to study abroad, mainly in Japan — as many as fifteen thousand in 1907. Returning, these so-called "students" have become the leaders in the boycotts against the United States and Japan. They have engaged actively in propaganda of a patriotic nature, and, more constructively, have translated into their mother tongue hundreds of books on history, economics, and law, including the whole Japanese code, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Voltaire, Montesquieu, the "Contrat Social" of Rousseau, the works of Henry George and Karl Marx, and many others of the same general nature.

These movements show a widespread public opinion friendly to Chinese regeneration. Various administrative measures have been inaugurated which are yet more promising.

The old method of dividing the Peking Bureau into provincial departments, and letting each of these care for every sort of business from its special province, has been altered. Instead of a bureau having general charge over the salt-tax, the customs, and the appointments of each province, there have been organized ten departments, dealing each with its specialty throughout the entire realm. The five recently-created bureaus—Agriculture, Works and Commerce, Police and Constabulary, Post-Office and Education—tell by their names the centralizing purpose of the new régime. Formerly five hundred clerks attended a department, with office-hours from eleven A.M. to two P.M. including lunch, smoking-time, and due intervals for examining peddlers' wares. Now a much reduced force is employed, with actual working-hours generally from nine A.M. to four P.M. The foot-binding of children has been prohibited; pressure has been put upon the officials who smoke opium to abandon it, under penalty of dismissal from the service; classical essays as a civil-service examination subject are being given up, and the education of the Chinese youths abroad is being encouraged. A large number of Japanese officers have been engaged to train the khaki-clad and well-armed Chinese regulars, who have shown excellent aptitude. The Government has bought back practically all foreign railroad concessions, and all the valuable mining concessions except the Kai-ping coal-fields.



Even representative government is well under way. The Dowager Empress's edict of August 27, 1908, by which a nine-year period was set for the devolution of legislative powers to provincial assemblies and a national senate has been justified by remarkable success. The local legislatures, elected under carefully restricted suffrage qualifications, have grappled earnestly with the economic problems of the districts. The senate, of thirty-two members, selected by the Prince Regent from an elected body, has not yet had time to show results, but the calibre of the men in it is encouraging.

China is making a real effort to get abreast of the times. But never was a nation brought more directly before the judgment-bar on the plain test of character. Upon the capacity of the race for private sacrifice and public honesty rests primarily her salvation. Whether China can or cannot rise to the task depends upon her own manhood, and no one can be prophet of the issue; for all estimate of Chinese character is perplexed by that curious Eastern subtlety of contradictions which baffle understanding.

The inability of the Chinese to keep fingers out of the public till is proverbial; yet the very high standard of business integrity is universally conceded.

The quality of Chinese honesty is attributed by some to the local idea of good form, and the obvious mercantile maxim that future credit depends upon



SUMMER PALACE OF THE EMPEROR





present performance. Bourse operators may be scrupulously exact as to obligations which the mere lifting of a finger imposes, while engaged in campaigns diverting to their private speculations the funds of a chain of banks, or looting the values from the minority owners of a street-railway.

Chinese business integrity is said to be due to the fact that her merchants are of the upper class; cowardice in war, to the fact that her soldiers are of the lowest caste. In Japan the condition is exactly reversed: hence the prowess of her Samurai, and the peccability of her clerks — such that Japanese bankers employ Chinamen to handle their money.

Since the Japanese have built up an effective public administration, it is fair to give the Chinese the benefit of faith, and to assume that in time they too will rally to the task, and make a modern state.

With this should come the Trans-Mongolia Railway: opening to the plainsmen of Central Asia a prospect of civilization and advance.

Equally or more important, looking at things broadly, it would give to the world the best of the great Asian trade-routes. Examine a globe and see what, in the shortening of distance, this land-route to Peking signifies. Note the enormous circum-navigations that must be made in going around by India and Suez, and measure then the direct overland route by the Urga Post-Road and the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The bulky freight from the Asian Coast to western Europe will still pay tribute to the sea. To compete with vessel-transportation, which carries a ton from Shanghai to London for seven dollars, the railroads over the 7283 miles from Vladivostok to Paris would have to make a rail-rate of one tenth of a cent per ton-mile; this is impossible when one remembers the average American rate of eight tenths of a cent. But North China, all North Asia, and Europe west of Moscow, are within the railway radius of an Urga-Peking line.

From interior China may be drawn the goods for half a continent. The tea-freight which Russia receives over the long sea-trip to Odessa, or by the trans-shipped Vladivostok route, can be loaded then at Kalgan on the car that goes to Moscow. By it the silks of the Tien-tsin merchants may be rolled through into the freight-yards of St. Petersburg, and the timberless cities of interior China may build with the wood of the Yakutski Oblast forests. By it the dwellers in the valley of the Hoang-ho, "China's Sorrow," may be nourished in their need with the wheat of the Angara Valley; the Manchu mandarins may be clad in the furs from the Yenesei; the ploughshares tempered in Petrovski Zavod break the ancient soil of the Chi-li Province; the silver of the Altai Mountains make the bangles that deck the anklets of the purdah women.

For America the road will open a commercial highway into the very heart of a new and expand-

ing empire. American rails may carry American cars, — those ever moving shuttles which weave the woof of trade. American woolens and felts may protect the Siberians against their Arctic cold, American machinery mine and refine their gold. New England cottons, utilizing the Panama Canal, may clothe the myriad coolies of interior China. Here is the mail-route of ten days from Paris to Peking, against the thirty-five days needed by the fastest ships. Here is the quickest passenger-route from London to Yokohama. All these potentialities lie as the fallow heritage of the Urga Road, if beyond Kalgan it is given its avenues to China and the sea. It is civilization that must profit when the equilibrium of the East is restored, and over the old Urga Road China is relinked to the West by the trains of the great Asian Railway.



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